$3.75
(Canada $4.75)

October 1995
Number 56

# FIRST THINGS

## A Jew in Anti-Christian America

by Midge Decter

## The Gospel of Life: A Symposium

with Avery Dulles, Russell Hittinger,
Richard M. Doerflinger, Robert P. George

## Villages and Virtues by Mary Ann Glendon

## At the End of Pragmatism by Glenn Tinder

**Opinions and Reviews:** J. Bottum on Spritely Ads
A. J. Bacevich on Foreign Policy • James Nuechterlein on Stupidity
Alan Jacobs • Robert Benne • Peter L. Berger • Gilbert Meilaender
Janet Marsden • Thomas Guarino • Jeffrey Satinover • Robert L. Wilken

10
0 73361 64655 2

**Richard John Neuhaus**

**The Public Square**

*A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Why does this differ from every other handbook on our government?

Clarence Carson pulls no punches as he explains why:

> "It would be a considerable fraud to do a book on American government which talked as if the Constitution were still being substantially observed, that pretended that when Presidents took the oath of office they intended to observe the bounds set by the Constitution, that Congressmen recited their pledges with the same intent, and that federal judges were still construing the Constitution as it was written. In sum, any book on American government worthy of the name ought to make clear how remote from the Constitution the government has become."

This is the book. Which is why we believe that it's the only book on our government that Americans can trust today. Carson gives you all the basics, including:

- ► The roots of the American system, both scriptural and secular . . . key contributions of ancient Greece and Rome . . . the Middle Ages . . . the Renaissance . . . the Reformation . . . modern Europe and England . . . and our own colonial experience
- ► The battle over the Constitution. The framers' real intentions, as shown in their writings
- ► Betrayed, especially in our time: the letter AND the spirit of the Constitution
- ► How government functions at each level — federal, state and local. The court system, from justice of the peace to the Supreme Court
- ► The changing presidency. The impact (for better or worse) of Washington . . . Jefferson . . . Lincoln . . . FDR and his successors
- ► The rise of the Welfare State. The staggering growth of government spending and bureaucracy
- ► Massive departures from the Constitution in our century (on the way to the Leviathan state). How to get the government back on course

**Use coupon to get this $32.95, 603-page volume FREE**

### What every American must know about our government

Carson exposes errors and myths that litter most other texts on our government as he refutes decades of liberal propaganda:

- The God-derived "natural law" principles on which our government was based. How they were corrupted, and finally abandoned. The secularist philosophies that took over
- Why the Civil War was unconstitutional. How it upset the balance of powers and led to unprecedented federal control
- The three events that mark the "great divide" in American history — even more than the Civil War
- Why it is inaccurate to call our system a "democracy"
- The rise of "judicial activism." The Court's effort to drive religion and morality out of public life. How Constitutional *protections* of religion gradually became laws against religion
- How new "rights" not found in the Constitution (e.g., abortion, pornography) were created by Court fiat
- The difference between revolutionary and evolutionary socialism. How the latter dominated our government in recent decades — in everything but name

This book is valuable for parents who want to correct the misinformation fed to our children today. Homeschoolers will never find a better text.

**But please, don't think of this simply as a fine textbook. Think of it as the perfect companion to your own ideas about where our country SHOULD be headed; and the ideal guidebook for your own efforts to restore decency to government and society. Clarence Carson puts the sources and the answers at your fingertips.**

### How the Club Works

Every 4 weeks (13 times a year) you get a free copy of the Club Bulletin, which offers you the Featured Selection plus a good choice of Alternates. Books on current issues, religion, education, homeschooling, politics, children's books, etc. — all of interest to conservatives. ★ If you want the Featured Selection, do nothing. It will come automatically. ★ If you don't want the Featured Selection, or you do want an Alternate, indicate your wishes on the handy card enclosed with your Bulletin and return it by the deadline date. ★ The majority of Club books are offered at 20-50% discounts, plus a charge for shipping and handling. ★ As soon as you buy and pay for 3 books at regular Club prices, your membership may be ended at any time, either by you or by the Club. ★ If you ever receive a Featured Selection without having had 10 days to decide if you want it, you may return it at Club expense for full credit. ★ Good service. No computers! ★ The Club will offer regular Superbargains, mostly at 70-95% discounts plus shipping and handling. Superbargains do not count toward fulfilling your Club obligation, but do enable you to buy fine books at giveaway prices. ★ Only one membership per household.

## CONSERVATIVE BOOK CLUB

33 Oakland Avenue • Harrison, N.Y. 10528

Please accept my membership in the Club and send me FREE the 603-page, $32.95 *Basic American Government* by Clarence B. Carson. I agree to buy 3 additional books at regular Club prices over the next 18 months. I also agree to the Club rules spelled out in this coupon.

FT - 54

*Name* _____

*Address* _____

*City* _____ *State* _____ *Zip* _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# FIRST THINGS

A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life

October 1995 • Number 56

CORRESPONDENCE 2 Letters on Waco, Amendments to the School Prayer Amendment, Calling abortion murder, the ADL and Anti-Semitism, etc.

THIS TIME 13 *James Nuechterlein* Who's Stupid Now?

OPINION 15 *J. Bottum* Spritely Ads
*Alan Jacobs* Dowsing in Scripture
*A. J. Bacevich* Wilsonian Dream, Bosnian Reality
*Robert Benne* A Contract with the Churches?
*Peter L. Berger* Military Necessities

ARTICLES

25 *Midge Decter* A Jew in Anti-Christian America

32 *Avery Dulles, Russell Hittinger, Richard M. Doerflinger, Robert P. George* The Gospel of Life: A Symposium

REVIEW ESSAYS 39 *Mary Ann Glendon* Villages and Virtues

43 *Glenn Tinder* At the End of Pragmatism

BOOKS 47

*Gilbert Meilaender* The Vulnerable God by William C. Placher
*Janet Marsden* John Cardinal Krol and the Cultural Revolution by E. Michael Jones
*Thomas Guarino* Encyclopedia of Catholicism edited by Richard P. McBrien
*Jeffrey Satinover* The Jung Cult by Richard C. Noll
*Robert L. Wilken* The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200-1336 by Caroline Walker Bynum; . . . *and* Briefly Noted

THE PUBLIC SQUARE 74 A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life
*Richard John Neuhaus*
**This Month:** That They May Be One, *etc.*
Poetry by *Thomas Ramey Watson* (24), *B. R. Strahan* (42), *Suzanne Lawrence* (73)

Editor-in-Chief: *Richard John Neuhaus*
Editor: *James Nuechterlein*
Managing Editor: *Matthew Berke*
Associate Editor: *J. Bottum*
Poetry Editor: *Jill P. Baumgaertner*
Publisher: *Institute on Religion and Public Life*
Publishing Service: *Publishing Management Associates*

FIRST THINGS: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life (ISSN #1047-5141) is published monthly (except for combined issues June/July and August/September) for $29 per year by The Institute on Religion and Public Life, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, NY 10010. Second class postage paid at New York, NY and additional mailing office. POSTMASTER: send address changes to FIRST THINGS: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life, P.O. Box 3000 . Dept. FT, Denville, NJ 07834. **Editorial Offices:** The Institute on Religion and Public Life, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, NY 10010. **Editorial Phone:** (212) 627-1985. **Advertising Offices:** 129 Phelps Avenue, Suite 312, Rockford, IL 61108. **Advertising Phone:** (815) 398-8569. **Subscription Department:** P.O. Box 3000, Dept. FT, Denville, NJ 07834. 1-800-783-4903. Unsolicited material cannot be returned unless accompanied by sufficient return postage. Newsstand distribution by Eastern News Distributors, Inc., 2020 Superior Street, Sandusky, OH 44870. Copyright © 1995 by The Institute on Religion and Public Life. All rights reserved. Produced in the USA.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# FIRST THINGS

FIRST THINGS is published by Religion and Public Life, an interreligious, nonpartisan research and education institute whose purpose is to advance a religiously informed public philosophy for the ordering of society. RPL also sponsors scholars conferences, consultations, research projects, public educational events, and a fellows program.



EDITORIAL BOARD

Peter Berger
Midge Decter
Stanley Hauerwas
Gertrude Himmelfarb
David Novak
Michael Novak
George Weigel

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

Hadley Arkes
Walter Berns
James Burtchaell
David Dalin
Thomas Derr
Jean Bethke Elshtain
James Finn
Ernest Fortin
Suzanne Garment
Mary Ann Glendon
Bruce Hafen
Carl F. H. Henry
Russell Hittinger
Leonid Kishkovsky
Glenn Loury
George Marsden
Gilbert Meilaender
Max Stackhouse


# Correspondence

## Waco Revisited

Certainly Dean M. Kelley did not know when he wrote, and you did not know when you published, "Waco: A Massacre and its Aftermath," (May), that the April 19, 1995 bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City would occur.

The motivation behind the bombing is not yet entirely clear. Those arrested are innocent until proven guilty. Waco may or may not turn out to be the reason, however illogical to most minds, for the taking of more than two hundred lives in Oklahoma City. But certainly the loss of life at Mt. Carmel has been more than avenged, if indeed that was the motive of the bomber.

I'm not clear what Mr. Kelley's point is in his article. I suppose he hopes that congressional hearings into the Waco disaster will "keep the pot boiling," because "there is much about the disaster at Mt. Carmel that has not yet come out." He details many apparent blunders by federal authorities who misunderstood Waco in "cult stereotypes" and, in his estimation, denied religious liberty to "those who believe they are touched by the finger of God."

*Newsweek* magazine has pointed out that to militias and far-right groups and commentators, "Waco is a rallying cry, a harbinger of the day that government troops will kick down their doors and steal their guns and their children." Arrested suspect Timothy McVeigh made a pilgrimage to Waco and was particularly agitated by the incident. Even sober and logical articles such as Mr. Kelley's reinforce paranoia for the Timothy McVeighs and Terry Nichols of our land.

As far as I'm concerned, if Waco represents religious liberty and the finger of God, if siring more than a dozen children by several women is rightly part of religious liberty, if the possession of an immense stockpile of arms and ammunition is an expression of religious liberty, if firing upon federal agents is the prerogative of Americans exercising their religious liberty, then Mr. Kelley can take such religious liberty right back to the National Council of Churches, where he is Counselor on Religious Liberty. Or he can take it to Oklahoma City and see how well it plays there just now. It is not the kind of liberty I want to claim as a Christian and as an American.

Jeanne Devine Bonner
Wichita, KS

. . . Since organizing several protests during the Waco standoff and another one on the opening day of the trial of the survivors in San Antonio, I have often despaired of seeing "our side" accurately portrayed in any responsible medium. Many of those who object most fiercely to the government's conduct at Waco (especially, it seems, those who were silent while the disaster was in progress) are obsessed with conspiracy theories and prone to overly malicious accusations. I am satisfied that garden-variety stupidity accounts for much of the slaughter. The mainstream media, meanwhile, seem to have accepted the government's version of events—at least at the editorial level, where it counts; reporters I spoke to during the standoff and before the trial were skeptical in the extreme as regards the official version of reality. Your magazine is the first respectable publication I am aware of to bring such skepticism to the surface.

In the aftermath of the horrible climax, the challenge is to avoid collective judgments. I believe (and believed, prior to Waco) that the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) should be abolished, but I avoid writing off all ATF agents. I am informed that there were numerous unpublicized resignations in the ATF after Waco. . . .

Thanks again for printing "Waco: A Massacre and Its Aftermath."

Jay Manifold
Irving, TX

Congratulations to Dean M. Kelley for piercing the government's fog of self-justification surrounding the Waco fiasco. Several points came to mind as I read his article.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The ATF and FBI have a vested interest in perpetuating the stereotype of the Davidians as "crazed cultists," blindly following a charismatic leader who was (a) a con man, (b) insane, or (c) both. This view drains public sympathy, creating the impression that the Davidians somehow deserved their fate by daring to defy the government. Consequently, the government escapes blame. We saw this happen throughout the siege and its disastrous aftermath as the ATF spoon-fed its story to an all-too-willing press. (Remember the "Waco Wacko" headlines?) The Davidians had two strikes against them: they were a religious group, and they had guns. The media, with their anti-religious, anti-gun bias, were predisposed to buy the stereotype. After the fire, President Clinton himself seemed to shrug off the carnage by saying that "some religious fanatics murdered themselves."...

Felecia Barbaro
Brooklyn, NY

First Things reached me two days after the Oklahoma City disaster. The timing of your Waco report is downright eerie....

But as the Oklahoma story unfolds, discovering a bizarre connection between religion and arms, "patriotism" and mass murder, one has to rethink First Things' good faith in publishing the Waco article. The moral of Mr. Kelley's account is without doubt egregious miscarriage of justice. In the light of the Oklahoma City event, however, is it too much to wish that Mr. Kelley had at least raised the question whether selling arms to maintain a Christian sect constitutes a perversion of Christianity itself? And might he not have wondered whether David Koresh's belief that he was "another Christ" appearing at the end-time opening of the Seventh Seal warrants protection under the guarantee of freedom of religion? Did it occur to Mr. Kelley that the behavior of government agencies may have been determined by ineptitude and rigid adherence to "procedure" rather than by conspiracy to commit tyranny?

Does Mr. Kelley still stand by his article? Does First Things stand by him? Does either or both stand by the Michigan militia? These are not rhetorical questions.

Eloise K. Goreau
Princeton, NJ

I must say that Dean M. Kelley's Waco essay is the most accurate, concise, and unbiased article I have read about the tragedy.

There is one quote of David Koresh's in the article, however, that I have never accepted as true. The statement was: "Neither the ATF nor the National Guard will ever get me. They got me once, and they'll never get me again."

ATF Agent Robert Rodriguez testified that this was said by David Koresh. This "quote" is vintage law enforcement addition. Agent Rodriguez's demeanor when he said this at the trial certainly wasn't convincing to me. Everyone that I spoke to that survived the fire that had any knowledge told me that it was Koresh's plan, once it was known that "something" was going to happen, to greet the law enforcement officers and talk to them to see what the problem was and how it could be resolved.

Again, I compliment you for your good work.

Mike DeGuerin
Houston, TX
*(Mr. DeGuerin was counsel for Paul Fatta, one of the surviving Branch Davidians later brought to trial.)*

Dean M. Kelley's article presents both a biased and specious viewpoint. Mr. Kelley seems to have carefully filtered the facts and excluded information and sources that did not support his conclusions. His account is hardly objective—beginning with the description of the Waco standoff as a "massacre."

Mr. Kelley no longer speaks for the National Council of Churches. He has retired and is now a "consultant." He does have the dubious distinction of being touted as a religion resource by *Freedom* magazine, published by the notorious Church of Scientology (a.k.a. "Cult of Greed," *Time* magazine cover, May 1991). Some of the "experts" cited by Kelley in First Things also appear in *Freedom*, such as Philip Arnold, James Tabor, and Nancy Ammerman.

Professor Ammerman had no experience dealing with the Davidians before or during the standoff. Her report footnotes cite many well-known cult apologists, some currently serving on advisory boards associated with cult groups. Ms. Ammerman made and has acknowledged errors and misstatements in her report, calling into question her credibility.

There is a pattern to Mr. Kelley's analysis. The government did everything wrong, but not David Koresh. He was the persecuted leader of a "new religious movement," with happy, healthy, well-adjusted followers just tending to his "commercial ventures." Then came the government to persecute and destroy him.

Mr. Kelley seems to feel there is a government conspiracy to cover up the truth about Waco. The physical evidence gathered by specialists cannot be trusted because they too are part of the conspiracy. This reads like theories propounded by fringe groups such as the "Patriots" and so-called "militias," not a "counselor on religious liberty" once associated with the National Council of Churches.

Mr. Kelley tries to minimize Koresh's trial for attempted murder in 1987. Though he was let go by a hung jury, the prosecutor described Koresh as "dangerous," advising then that he was "building an arsenal" and "preparing for a battle with someone." According to published reports, Koresh had sex with a thirteen-year-old girl, estranged married couples in his group, sexually exploited women members, and bilked at least one elderly couple of their life savings. Mr. Kelley says David Koresh was touched by "the finger of God." However, most people would surmise he was just "touched" (i.e., sociopathic, paranoid, and delusional).

Mr. Kelley claims that "arms . . . were primarily the Davidians' commercial stock-in-trade." He excuses illegally converted weapons, and dismisses photographs of machinery used to convert firearms as only a possible use. There is a saying—"If it

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it just might be a duck." Mr. Kelley's logic concludes it is an elephant.

Mr. Kelley contends that the Davidian children "were found to be healthy, well-adjusted, and non-traumatized." However, the definitive report about Davidian child abuse was made by Bruce Perry, M.D., Ph.D., Chief of Psychiatry at Texas Children's Hospital. Dr. Perry examined the twenty-one children released from the compound and concluded they had been abused, traumatized, and were not well-adjusted. This report proves that previous reports by Child Protective Services were wrong.

Nancy Ammerman is quoted by Mr. Kelley as saying that "the notion of cult brainwashing has been thoroughly discredited by the academic community." The academic community has long accepted that destructive groups manipulate their members. This is well-documented through numerous books, articles, and reports. Both the American Psychological Association and the American Sociological Association have passed resolutions acknowledging thought reform. Contrary to Ms. Ammerman's assertion, there is an ongoing dialogue and discovery process concerning this subject.

The government did make mistakes at Waco. The ATF was too aggressive and could have opted for a more cautious and considered approach in serving its warrants. The FBI never fully recognized the cult dynamic central to the standoff and instead saw it as a terrorist "hostage-rescue" situation, despite the advice of experts. However, these agencies enforced the law and could not walk away after federal agents were murdered (though Mr. Kelley would have us believe they shot each other through "friendly fire").

David Koresh caused the standoff—he was the one who decided to violate the law, which led to the confrontation with government agents. When the warrants were served he could have allowed a legal search. Once the standoff began he could have ended it at any time by simply telling his followers to put down their weapons and come out peacefully. He refused to do either and, according to substantial audio and aerial infrared surveillance, decided instead to burn himself and his followers to death.

Mr. Kelley claims that cult critics know "very little about the history or dynamics of religion." Numerous clergy, religious scholars, and denominational leaders are cult critics. Over the past decade as a member of two national committees of a large denomination, I have witnessed their work and commitment.

David Koresh's so-called religious "frame of reference" shifted constantly and was subject to his moods and convenience. He often contradicted himself. This negates the conclusion reached by Phil Arnold and James Tabor that he "could be reasoned with if approached within his own frame of reference." This conclusion is based upon their assumption that Koresh had a consistent "frame of reference." He did not and that is why, though that approach was advised and tried, it failed.

Mr. Kelley prefers the phrase "new religious movements" to describe destructive cults. However, cults like Koresh's Davidians are hardly "religious movements," but rather the contrived creations of individuals seeking to exploit others for their own benefit. Mr. Kelley seems to think because they are clothed in religion, application of the law and accountability amount to persecution. Perhaps the most frightening aspect of Waco is how so much abuse went on for so long while so little was done about it.

Cult apology has become a cottage industry. Whenever a cult tragedy occurs these groups and their spin doctors go to work carefully crafting apologetics. What's next on Kelley's list, the Aum sect of Japan? . . .

Dean Kelley would like to lead us on trips into his fantasy world, which seems devoid of logic or reason. However, given the recent history of radical destructive groups from Jonestown to Waco, the Solar Temple Suicide in Switzerland, the Aum subway gassing, and now the Oklahoma bombing (apparently motivated by Waco conspiracy theories), can anyone afford the price of travelling with Mr. Kelley?

Rick Ross
Phoenix, AZ

**Dean M. Kelley replies:**

My thanks to those—including the many who wrote to me privately—for their compliments on my article. A number of my critics require individual responses.

Jeanne Devine Bonner. The phrase "finger of God" was used by me as a symbol for the unusual phenomenon of a person obsessed with a vision of the Divine that gives him no rest and that draws others who want to share that vision. In a paragraph that was dropped from the article, I explained that I did not mean that such persons had "got it right (whatever 'right' may be in such matters)" but that they were gripped by a compulsion that is rare in human affairs and worthy of respect even though a particular vision may be flawed (most of them are, in one way or another).

In many primitive cultures, which are not normally indulgent of deviant behavior, room is often made for those thought to be touched by God who do not fit the accepted patterns of religious conduct. But in our "modern" culture, so indulgent of all manner of deviations from the norm—if there still is a norm—the situation is reversed. It is innovation in religion for which no room is found. Strictures on nonconforming behavior that have dissolved in other areas are suddenly invoked to suppress religious nonconformity and severe penalties are meted out to such offenders.

Ms. Bonner expresses a common misunderstanding about religious liberty in this country. Theoretically, the law provides room for religious innovation, though the law is not always observed. But it is not unlimited room. There is a very sensible test worked out by the Supreme Court three decades ago (and then abandoned in 1990 but reinstated by Congress in 1993 in the Religious Freedom Restoration Act) that balances the religious claim against the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

public interest. If a sincere religious practice is substantially burdened by governmental action, the government can be required to justify such burden by evidence of a compelling state interest that can be served in no less burdensome way. This test eliminates claims that are not religious, not sincere, or not substantially burdened. Others may lose out because a court finds that a paramount public interest is at stake and that it cannot adequately be served by simply exempting religious claimants, as was the usual solution accepted by the generation that wrote the Constitution.

Beyond that legal test there is a pragmatic one. Is the offense sought to be corrected by governmental action of sufficient priority to justify the expenditure of law enforcement resources for its remediation? There is no shortage of drug-gang wars with slaughter of innocent bystanders on the streets of major cities to which the federal agencies could devote their attention with greater justification.

The initial warrants that were the justification for the raid that precipitated the tragedy were essentially about allegedly illicit gun parts, an offense that rises in Texas to the moral level of jaywalking. (The trotting out by the government long after the fact of numerous plastic-wrapped charred weapons said to be illegal and said to have been found in the ruins of Mt. Carmel does not justify the initial warrants, let alone the ill-conceived "dynamic entry" to serve them, as has been pointed out by many who know more about firearms and about warrants than I.)

I am not an apologist for everything that David Koresh and the Branch Davidians may have done, but I do not believe that they were given an opportunity to arrive at a peaceful resolution of the situation, as Koresh came unarmed to the front door to do until he saw that the charging commandos were not disposed to dialogue. By "peaceful resolution," I do not mean abject capitulation and admission of supposed guilt. And whatever the Davidians may have done was hardly deserving of the gassing and cremation of some eighty men, women, and children, which—whoever may have been responsible in whatever degree—would not have happened if the federal agents had not undertaken a major onslaught at a cost of millions of dollars against an obscure little band of believers out on the Texas prairie.

Eloise K. Goreau. The selling of arms is not a fund-raising device that I would use to maintain a Christian sect, but then I don't live in Texas. Whether it is a "perversion of Christianity itself" is an intriguing question and turns on a definition of "Christianity itself." Quite a few activities have been carried on by important elements of Christianity that might raise the same normative query: burnings of heretics at the stake by Protestants and Catholics, hangings of witches by Puritan divines at Salem, etc.

David Koresh's claim to be "another Christ" is not a claim I would accept, but the guarantee of freedom of religion is fortunately not limited to people of whose views I approve. I did not attribute the behavior of government agencies at Waco to a "conspiracy to commit tyranny." I should like to think "ineptitude and rigid adherence to procedure" offer the simplest explanation. It may have been worse, as some—including the plaintiffs in the civil suits—charge, but I have not (yet) seen evidence that would require a more damning explanation.

Do I stand by my article? Certainly. I can't answer for First Things, but neither of us is responsible for what "the Michigan militia" or anyone else may misunderstand by the information we sought to present in the most objective and reliable way we could.

Rick Ross. "Kelley no longer speaks for the National Council of Churches." I never did, except—like other NCC staff—in formal statements (as to congressional committees) based on NCC policy and approved by the General Secretary. I am semi-retired and retained on contract to serve as secretary of the NCC Committee on Religious Liberty (with the title "Counselor on Religious Liberty"), attached to the Washington Office of the NCC, and responsible to the Deputy General Secretary, who is in charge of that office.

I do not necessarily discern a government "conspiracy" to "cover up the truth about Waco," though there may be one; the evidence is not yet all in. The government has its viewpoint about what happened and why and has expressed it at great length in 1,300 pages of federal reports and some 7,000 pages of prosecution testimony in the criminal trial. It is in the government's interest to defend this self-exonerating understanding of the situation, though—to judge by the response to my article—a great many people have come to find it less and less persuasive.

Rick Ross also has a personal interest in advancing and reinforcing his view of the situation (though the Justice Department review seeks to distance the FBI from any reliance upon his advice). He finds employment from time to time as a deprogrammer, whose labors depend upon hyping the hysteria over "destructive cults," as by trying to portray the tragedies of Jonestown, the Brotherhood of the Solar Temple, and Aum Shinrikyo as being all alike, which they are not. I am not prepared to evaluate those distant tragedies in detail without comparable research and analysis of the facts that are largely unknown to anyone in this country at this point.

On the other hand, I do not have an economic or career interest in spending many months researching and writing on the Waco tragedy. I am not paid by the surviving Branch Davidians to try to rehabilitate their cause. At the time the Waco article was launched in the fall of 1994, it was looked upon by First Things and me as a difficult and thankless task, apt to earn more obloquy than praise and more indifference than either. Curiously, it didn't turn out the way, to the chagrin of those who thought they had put all that behind them.

The dispute over whether "the notion of cult brainwashing has been thoroughly discredited by the academic community" would take a book to pursue. Suffice it to say that a federal judge, Lowell Jensen, exam-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ined that subject in great detail in 1990 and concluded that the concept of "brainwashing" was not sufficiently accepted in the fields of psychology or sociology to be admitted as expert testimony at trial in federal court [*U.S. v. Fishman*, 743 F. Supp. 713 (N.D. Cal. 1990)].

## The Real Enemy

I agree with Stanley Hauerwas in his May article "Preaching As Though We Had Enemies" that as Christians we have enemies, but I do not think our primary enemy is complacency as to the benefits of a free market economy and a limited, constitutional government. Our primary enemy is the counterculture and its elite, which have declared a religious and cultural war against our traditional beliefs in faith, family, and freedom through limited government and personal responsibility. . . .

With education leading the way by undermining the young, continued success by the counterculture elite in its all-out religious and cultural war against our traditional beliefs will drive us into an Orwellian dystopia of pandemic godlessness, amorality, immorality, illegitimacy, illiteracy, abortion, family breakdown, dependency, crime, and massive government authoritarianism. Not to worry about complacency over economic and political freedom—there will not be any.

George Weber
Portland, OR

## Amending the Amended Amendment

James Stoner's proposed constitutional amendment ("Amending the School Prayer Amendment," May) would put government (the state, the school board, etc.) in the business of managing and regulating public devotions, of preferring group prayer over all other modes of religious activity, of taxing citizens for the support of religious institutions, and of diminishing rights of conscience. Contrary to Mr. Stoner's assertions, church-state separation has been good for religion and religious freedom in America, a fact attested to by all of history.

Edd Doerr
Americans for Religious Liberty
Silver Spring, MD

The basis of the Supreme Court's decisions in the area of religion has been, most of the time, the Fourteenth Amendment. The First Amendment only prohibits acts of the federal government. The Fourteenth gives the federal government the role of watchdog over the states, to prevent them from denying people their rights. . . .

Thus it is true to say that, whatever may be the sources of the strict separationism that we see today in the Supreme Court, the Court's application of it to the states is an unintended consequence of the era of Reconstruction. But the citizens are not aware of this; the cover story, so to speak, has been that all these decisions come straight from the First Amendment, and are faithful to the intentions of the Founders. This is not true. The Founders did not apply the Bill of Rights to the states, and they let the states deal with the establishment question any way they chose.

Granted, our circumstances are different, but we would benefit from following their example in regard to religion. The several states, being closer to the people, and less under the sway of the secular elite, pose less danger to religion than the United States, and can make more reasonable accommodations. If occasionally one of them does something outrageous, there are many ways that pressure can be brought to bear; and so it would be, if no remedy were available through the federal courts. This is an area in which we can trust the American people to show a tolerant spirit, to treat injury done to others as if done to themselves, and to respond appropriately.

So, while I like James Stoner's amendment, I would like it better if it had a second clause that would explicitly annul the Fourteenth Amendment as it relates to religious questions. . . .

Michael Buckley
Westerville, OH

**James Stoner replies:**

Agreeing that religious liberty is good for religion and for America, I would reply to Mr. Doerr that government is already in the business of managing and regulating public devotions—namely by suppressing them—and that under the regime he apparently favors, not a few citizens find themselves taxed to support institutions that are actively hostile to their faith. As Mr. Buckley surely noticed, I meant to word my draft amendment so as neither to endorse the Supreme Court's practice of nearly sixty years of applying the Establishment Clause to the states nor to require its abrogation. While I would agree that a healthy moral life is better anchored in a real community than in a realm of abstract rules, states have been known to sin in ways that a little moral pressure has not always been adequate to correct.

## Is Abortion Murder?

I found David Klinghoffer's article ("Baby Talk," June/July) both disingenuous and inaccurate.

Mr. Klinghoffer says, "They [prolifers] claim it is 'children' who die in abortions. Do they, however, *really* mean children—like the ones you see toddling in the street?" Excuse me? Does he *really* believe that toddlers are the only children worth saving? What about newborns, seven-month-old fetuses, or five-year-old quadriplegics in wheelchairs?

But what impells me to write is Mr. Klinghoffer's blatant misrepresentation of Scripture. He cites Exodus 21:22 as a passage that demonstrates how the Hebrews handled cases of abortion: a simple fine imposed on the abortionist. No big deal. I was startled. I couldn't remember ever reading that in my studies. And, of course, I never had. Mr. Klinghoffer forgot to mention the first part of that passage which reads, "When two men strive together . . . " In other words, when two men are fighting and *accidentally* cause a woman to miscarry, then a fine is imposed. However, if the woman was harmed in the "striving" (even accidentally), then "you shall give life for life." And nowhere does

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

this passage discuss the deliberate taking of unborn life, which is abortion. I believe abortion would have been inconceivable to the Hebrews. . . .

Sharon Gordon
Midland Park, NJ

In his thought-provoking article, David Klinghoffer rejects the claim that "it is children who die in abortion." People who talk this way don't even believe it themselves, Klinghoffer maintains, for if they did "they would be organizing clandestine paramilitary units to move against abortion providers at this moment." The inexcusably sloppy language of "child" and "murder" must not be used "in a movement that includes people, however few, like John Salvi."

Klinghoffer is surely right about the importance of using careful language with respect to this issue. He seems, however, not to have noticed an ambiguity in the statement of his own position. Klinghoffer leaves the reader guessing whether he means to say: (1) abortion *never* involves killing a child (only tissue) or (2) abortion does *not always* involve killing a child.

Once the two alternatives are set out, it is easy to see that Klinghoffer hasn't made much of a case.

For if Klinghoffer means (1), then he rests his case on a premise that is clearly false. After all, late abortions involve beings so manifestly human even proponents of abortion routinely acknowledge the fact.

If on the other hand Klinghoffer only means (2), the premise may be true, but it is far too weak to support his rejection of "baby talk," for (2) is clearly consistent with the claim that some abortions involve killing human infants.

I agree with Klinghoffer that abortion "is an interference with a divinely guided process of human reproduction," but I doubt that this claim impresses anyone but the already convinced. To get anywhere we have to use blunt language. This doesn't mean insisting that every abortion is a murder. But it does mean underscoring a fact few will deny: after *some* point in the pregnancy a human being is present. Let our friends on the other side name a time. We can then ask whether from that point on they are willing to stand against killing. A partial agreement is not all that we might hope for, but it is a start — a good start. To make it we must tell the awful truth: some abortions kill babies.

T. D. Sullivan
St. Paul, MN

David Klinghoffer's "Baby Talk" represents a Jewish approach when he claims that abortion, while not technically murder, "is strongly rejected as an interference in the divinely guided process of human reproduction." This idiom reflects the natural law theology of Christianity, but does not represent the positive law approach of the biblical source he correctly cites, Exodus 21:22, which deems the penalty for feticide to be a fine, not exile to a city of refuge, which is the punishment imposed for contributory accidental homicide.

The Talmud [TB Arachin 7a], like the Scripture cited above, defines the fetus as property. Reading divine intent into sacred texts is a dangerous business, because we may misrepresent the Giver of the Law in our rendering. . . . If the fetus is, for a literal reading of Scripture and Talmud, property, the fetus should be given no less regard than all of the species we are asked to save, even though living, breathing human beings might be asked to go without food, work, and dignity in order that these species survive. . . .

(Rabbi) Alan J. Yuter
Congregation Israel
Springfield, NJ

I do appreciate the dilemma of David Klinghoffer in addressing the issue of abortion and the words "child," "murder," "genocide." Logic would demand (for someone who believed it) that violent means to protect the unborn are in order if the nomenclature is true.

Mr. Klinghoffer argues from his Jewish tradition, which does not consider the unborn a full human being. But what of the Catholic tradition, which in the words of John Paul II (*Evangelium Vitae*, par. 8) calls abortion "murder"? We cannot simply write off serious theologians and Church leaders who do consider abortion murder. What then of the logic that follows? Do we not have the same obligation to defend that unborn person as we would against someone who approached a one-year-old with a knife? . . .

This is the dilemma we face when trying to answer the logical conclusions of people like Paul Hill. We avoid the moral argument by claiming such people are crazy, or are religious fanatics, or are outside the pale of the moral argument. They are not. What is central to the argument is *violence* to human life—whether by abortion or by anti-abortion center violence.

I believe that on the pro-life side, the only answer, the only true solution to abortion clinic assault, is a complete dedication to nonviolence after the teachings of Jesus and Martin Luther King. But here is the real problem: Most of the pro-life movement is not truly and consistently pro-life. It is selectively pro-life as shown by the fact that many in the movement approve of capital punishment and war. They are selective killers just as the liberals are selective killers (pro-abortion, anti-capital punishment, anti-war). Both groups only discuss the *circumstances* under which violence can be used, not violence itself. We must reject all violence, root and branch. Unless we are absolutely pro-life in every respect, there is no way to deter the terrible coming confrontation between abortion providers and many in the pro-life movement. . . .

Peter J. Riga
Houston, TX

Okay, so argument by analogy isn't the most profound mode of discourse. Still, if I understand David Klinghoffer right, Harriet Beecher Stowe was woefully irresponsible in personifying Negro slaves as she did, given the impact it had on John Brown.

If Klinghoffer's aim was to persuade me to "moderate" my own anti-abortion rhetoric, it backfired. Instead, following his logic, I far better appreciate Paul Hill's reasoning than the convoluted, though well-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

meaning, objections of Hill's critics, Cardinal O'Connor among them.

For this, perhaps, the author truly deserves our thanks.

Stephen Settle
New Holstein, WI

**David Klinghoffer replies:**

I don't seem to have made much progress in convincing the readers of FIRST THINGS that if abortion really were murder, they would be obligated to do something about it other than vote, or carry signs, or write letters to the editor; and that if they refuse to do anything more strenuous than that, they should rethink their assumption that a fetus can be a human being in every sense in which they themselves are human beings.

As someone who tries to understand moral issues in the light of biblical law and the interpretations of it that have been passed down through traditions dating to its revelation, I can't see how a reader of the Bible could come away from that book thinking that God views fetuses as human beings. Sharon Gordon charges me with "blatant misrepresentation of Scripture," yet her own citation of Exodus 21:23-25 supports my citation of verse 22. If two men get into a fist fight and end up striking a pregnant woman, causing her to miscarry, a fine is exacted. This is a penalty less severe than for the accidental killing of a human being, thus suggesting that the unborn victim is not a human being. And please note here, T. D. Sullivan, that God (this section of Exodus is spoken by God to Moses) does not instruct us to ask about how far along the fetus is or to what extent it "looks" human.

God then goes on to say that if the same pugilists accidentally kill the woman, they are to be punished by paying "life for life." The ancient rabbis of the Jewish tradition argued about what the formulation means. Obviously, though, the text assumes a difference in moral gravity between the loss of a fetus' life and the loss of a mother's. If both mother and fetus were human beings in the full sense of that term, God would not need to make such a distinction.

As to Rabbi Yuter's statement that it is "dangerous" to "read divine intent" into biblical legislation, perhaps I misunderstand him. What does he do in his sermons and *shiurim*, what have our rabbis been doing for several thousand years, and what do contemporary readers of Jewish texts do, if not interpret the meaning of the Torah and its commandments? His citation of the Talmud itself requires interpretation. The Jewish tradition does view the fetus as a kind of property, rather than as an ensouled being. But the sense in which a body is "property" is different from the sense in which, say, the chair I'm sitting on is my property. My body is a form of property that I own, so to speak, in a very junior partnership with God. I am free to do what I want with it only up to a very clearly defined point. For instance, the Bible forbids me to tattoo it or shave certain parts of it—in order, among other purposes, to remind me that I "own" this "property" only on the conditions set out by its Creator. One of the conditions is that, if I am a woman with the potential life of a human being in my womb, I am not allowed to halt the development of that life.

At any rate, this is the Jewish view. I am reminded again by the letters of Peter J. Riga and Stephen Settle that some Christians possess a tradition on the problem of abortion at variance with that of our rabbis. Mr. Riga cites Pope John Paul II, whose *Evangelium Vitae* defines abortion as "murder," and goes on to call for "a complete dedication to nonviolence after the teachings of Jesus and Martin Luther King." Mr. Riga would have us foreswear all violence, including "capital punishment" and "war." This is a position consistent with his approach to abortion. As to whether, in his thoroughgoing pacifism, Mr. Riga is equally consistent with the Catholic tradition, I am not qualified to say, but I suspect he is not.

This brings us to a question that it is, likewise, not my place as a Jew to address in any detail. But what are we to make of a tradition that accepts the use of force in defending innocent human lives, but that, when it comes to defending one particular class of lives which it defines as fully human, feels that the best route is persuasion by words unaccompanied by vigorous actions? This approach to life-saving is being tried right now by the United Nations in Bosnia, and almost everyone has come to see that it doesn't work very well. Surely, as much as the statesmen at the UN, some Christians need to rethink their opinions either about what they are willing to do to save human lives, or about what constitutes a human life in the first place.

## Questions and Answers

In "Anti-Semitism and our Common Future" (June/July) Father Neuhaus writes that "the argument is that Christianity in America really is different, that it has internalized the imperatives of tolerance as a matter of religious duty, and that, more recently, it has come to see Judaism as an integral part of God's purposes in history."

I have four questions.

First, what percentage of American Christians agrees with these two claims?

Second, is the percentage of agreement higher among Catholics and Protestants who are conservatives or among those who are liberals?

Third, does the religious duty of tolerance that American Christianity has internalized extend to liberal Jews and Christians?

Fourth, is the percentage of those in agreement so low that the claim constitutes wishful thinking anyhow?

Fisher Humphreys
Birmingham, AL

**RJN replies:**

Not sure. Not sure. Yes. No.

## ADL and Anti-Semitism

We are disappointed by Richard John Neuhaus' intemperate and false assertion that anti-Semitism is "kept alive by institutions such as the Anti-Defamation League."

Father Neuhaus apparently believes that, to stay in business, ADL

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cynically manipulates the fears of Jews. He says, "[ADL's] fund-raising depends upon sustaining a high level of Jewish anxiety about anti-Semitism." This notion does more than unfairly impugn ADL: it also diminishes the significance of anti-Semitism.

Father Neuhaus notes that anti-Jewish feelings in this country have clearly declined. ADL, in a widely reported 1992 survey, also stated—hardly stoking Jewish anxiety—that "the vast majority of Americans reject most anti-Jewish stereotypes." However, our survey also indicated that between thirty-five and forty million adult Americans hold views that are unquestionably anti-Semitic. Thirty-five percent of those surveyed believe Jews are more loyal to Israel than America, for instance; 31 percent feel Jews have too much power. We presume Father Neuhaus would agree that these figures are valid causes for concern.

And while Father Neuhaus relegates anti-Semitism to "fringe groups such as Aryan Nation and racist skinheads," the Oklahoma City bombing has taught us that fringe groups, whether anti-Semitic or otherwise, need to be taken seriously.

Not that anti-Semitism resides only on the fringe. What of Louis Farrakhan, whose language and views have achieved an alarming legitimacy in the African-American community? What of the prominence of Republican presidential candidate Pat Buchanan, whose career includes a long record of hostility toward Jews?

ADL fundraisers did not invent Farrakhan or Buchanan, fringe groups, nor the findings of the 1992 survey. Pogroms may not be imminent, but—especially in a culture that continues to legitimize intolerance—many American Jews have some anxiety about anti-Semitism because anti-Semitism exists.

ADL tries to make sense of, analyze, and counter anti-Semitism and extremism. Our credibility rests partly on the fact that, as part of our work, we have frequently decried charges of anti-Semitism we found false or inflated.

To suggest that we promote bigotry does us—and First Things readers—a disservice.

Abraham H. Foxman
Anti-Defamation League
New York, NY

**RJN replies:**

Yes, as the article in question repeatedly said, anti-Semitism is a legitimate and urgent cause of concern, for both Christians and Jews. For a somewhat different interpretation of the 1992 survey, see "Counting Anti-Semites" (The Public Square, March 1993). While Pat Buchanan has criticized, wrongheadedly in my view, the influence of Jewish lobbyists on U.S. foreign policy, it is false to say his "career includes a long record of hostility toward Jews." A record of hostility to positions favored by many Jews is a different matter. Regarding the "credibility" of ADL, it was not aided by the publication of a strident book attacking "the religious right" this past year, a book that was vigorously protested by many prominent American Jews. It should be noted that, after meeting with the Christian Coalition and others, ADL has been more temperate in its public statements about politically conservative Christians. While it is good to know that ADL has "frequently decried charges of anti-Semitism we found false or inflated," it is most regrettable that, although it was asked, it did not do so in the case of Human Life International (HLI), an instance discussed in my comment. At its April convention in Montreal, hundreds of screaming protestors accused HLI of being anti-Semitic, as did B'nai B'rith of Canada in a media campaign leading up to the convention. Far from decrying this false charge, ADL issued a press release commending criticism of HLI. I do not say that ADL is cynical. I do say that, by not making false and inflated charges and by publicly challenging those who do, ADL can help all of us, Jews and Christians alike, to oppose the evil of anti-Semitism.

## FT Goes PC?

Twice recently in The Public Square Richard John Neuhaus has employed a politically correct "their" in place of the grammatically correct "his." In your March issue, he wrote, "Anyone can, for instance, publish a novel titled *Moby Dick*, so long as they put their name (pseudonym) on it." In the June/July issue, he says, "Everybody worth their salt in sociology has had . . ." The use of the plural forms *they* and *their* for the singular *anyone* or *everybody* constitutes what, when I learned grammar, was termed a barbarism. Nowadays, of course, radical feminists teach that the generic use of *he* and *his* forms a barbaric assault upon the female half of the race. It is no longer surprising that the mainstream press, popular and academic, has embraced this teaching, but it is jarring to see Richard John Neuhaus follow the party line.

Michael Levin has noted, "We may dismiss the idea that masculine pronouns are misleading. . . . It is not possible to produce a woman who believed (until feminists cleared things up) that 'He who hesitates is lost' did not apply to her. It is universally understood that 'he' is used with intention of referring to both men and women, and that this intention has settled into a convention." The crux of the matter is that the radical feminists' assault on language conventions is part of a campaign to stigmatize traditional thought and traditional thinkers (i.e., benighted white male homophobes). And I believe the words *crux* and *stigmatize* are the *mots justes*, for the most reviled target of the revisionists is the Bible.

Already, "He who has ears to hear—let him hear" has been replaced in many churches by "They who have ears to hear—let them hear"—a perversion of Jesus' appeal to the individual (of whichever sex) into an appeal to the group. And once we've swallowed the abolition of the generic *he*, how can we object to the substitution of "God the Parent" and "God the Child" for what were once accepted as revealed names of the Trinity? . . .

Daniel Love Glazer
Chicago, IL

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

## The Law and Christian Science

I would like to update and supplement the February 1995 article discussing a recent court case involving the Church of Christ Scientist ("The Penalty for Wrong Ideas" by Paul T. McCain).

The update: in April 1995, the Minnesota Court of Appeals overturned a lower court order that the church pay $9 million in punitive damages and $150,000 in compensatory damages to the father of Ian Lundman, an 11-year-old diabetic who died while under the care of his Christian Science mother. The court upheld $1.5 million in compensatory damages against Ian's mother, his stepfather, and two others.

The supplement: McCain's article focused on the punitive damages award against the church; I would like to add a short discussion of the legal rights and responsibilities of Christian Science *parents* with respect to the care of their children.

In Canada and Great Britain, Christian Scientists, like everyone else, are required to provide medical care for their children. In contrast, American Christian Scientists have historically enjoyed legal protection from such requirements. But these protections have diminished over the past several years, most notably with the 1983 amendments to the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 1978. Prior to 1983, the act did not explicitly include failure to provide adequate medical care in its definition of negligent treatment. Moreover, the act required, as a condition for receiving certain federal grants, that states include in their child welfare statutes a provision for religious exception, ensuring that parents not be judged negligent solely on the basis that they do not provide medical treatment for a child because of their religious beliefs.

In 1983, three major changes relevant to Christian Science parents occurred. First, the wording of the federal definition of negligent treatment was amended to include the failure to provide adequate medical care. Second, federal regulations were amended to require states to make failure to provide adequate medical treatment a reportable condition, meaning that all such cases must be reported to child protection authorities, regardless of the religious motivations of the parents. Third, restrictions of federal funds were lifted so that states were no longer required to have religious exception provisions.

The 1983 amendments did not result in immediate or dramatic change. Specifically, the fact that failure to provide medical treatment had not been specifically *included* in the federal definition of negligent treatment did not mean that it had been *excluded*. Parents who failed to provide adequate medical care could have been considered negligent under the old definition—the change simply made that possibility explicit. Also, by 1983, most states had already included failure to provide medical care in their definitions of negligent treatment, meaning that such cases were reportable. And even today, only a handful of states have rescinded their religious exception provisions, including Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, and South Dakota. The primary effect of the federal amendments was to allow states much greater latitude in developing their own laws governing the care of children whose parents object to medical treatment, including Christian Scientists.

Both supporters and critics of Christian Science as appropriate care for children have been and continue to be very active advocates for their respective causes. Since 1983, Christian Science parents have been prosecuted in seven criminal cases around the country with varied outcomes; *Lundman v. McKown* represents an escalation in the conflict—it was the first civil case to go to trial. The McKowns were originally indicted for second-degree manslaughter, but the charges were dismissed, in part because of the religious exception clause of Minnesota's child neglect statute. Supported by critics of Christian Science care for children, Lundman then filed a civil suit against the McKowns, the First Church of Christ, Scientist, and four other defendants. . . . Similar civil suits between parents are likely to follow.

Cases involving the deaths of children under Christian Science care raise complex ethical and legal issues that reach to the heart of the First Amendment. Thus far, the U.S. Supreme Court has declined to review any of the four state supreme court decisions in criminal cases. The expansion of the conflict to include civil suits should compel the Court to speak on his contentious issue.

Deborah Harris-Abbott
The Park Ridge Center
Chicago, IL

## Time and Eternity

Perhaps I would be less puzzled by Robert W. Jenson's criticism of Wolfhart Pannenberg's *Systematic Theology: Volume 2* (May) if Mr. Jenson had explained what he means by the "Western mainstream's understanding of time and eternity" and how Christian theology should challenge it. Pannenberg believes, as I do, that the church has made much of the Western tradition what it is, and therefore theologians can stand within the tradition and challenge it by reminding it from whence it came. Jenson seems to exclude this possibility.

In his *Metaphysics and the Idea of God* and volume one of *Systematic Theology*, Pannenberg appeals to Plotinus' conception of time in criticizing thinkers as diverse as Augustine and Heidegger. But he also finds Plotinus inadequate because his system lacks any trinitarian mediation, which shapes the Christian doctrines of creation and eschatology. Thus, Pannenberg properly insists on a trinitarian interpretation of time. Whether one includes Plotinus in the Western mainstream or not, it is clear Pannenberg isn't swallowing the tradition's time-consciousness whole.

Further, what Pannenberg says about the Trinity, time, and truth are interdependent and must be viewed accordingly. On Pannenberg's terms, the anticipated verification or falsification of truth-claims is possible only

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Buzz Words

"An exciting new magazine...sparkling, truly zippy...a high-powered wow."
—*The Washington Times*

"...just a thrill. I can't believe how much good stuff you've gathered together."
—John Stossel, ABC News *20/20*

"I actually read nearly all the pages, which I only do with a handful of magazines."
—Gregg Easterbrook, *Newsweek*

"...absolutely splendid. So alive." —*Reader's Digest*

"...Intellectually aggressive..." —*The Washington Post*

"America's finest magazine of culture, politics and economics..."
—*Seattle Times*

## Find out what they're buzzing about...Free.

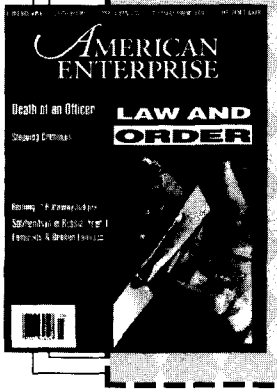
Active, influential people don't have time to dig through truckloads of weekly newsmagazines and political journals. Yet they know that keeping well-informed is critical to keeping up. What they need is an intelligent, one-stop source that brings them news and interesting analysis of today's most important political, economic and social trends.

Welcome to ***The American Enterprise***, the most invigorating journal of thought and opinion in America today.

We feature lively writing on serious topics from writers like William Bennett, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Charles Murray, Irving Kristol, Marvin Olasky, Ben Stein, Christina Hoff Sommers, Florence King, Thomas Sowell, Mickey Kaus, Michael Barone, Stanley Crouch, Eugene Genovese, Alan Keyes, Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, George Gilder, Michael Medved, Dinesh D'Souza, and Paul Johnson. Concise, enjoyable-to-read information on the direction of American society.

THE AMERICAN ENTERPRISE

THE NATIONAL MAGAZINE OF POLITICS, BUSINESS, AND CULTURE




Complete this form and we'll send you a free issue of *The American Enterprise*.

If you like what you see and want to subscribe at the special rate of $28 a year, return a completed invoice.

If you decide *The American Enterprise* isn't for you, just write "cancel" on your invoice. That's all there is to it. The free sample is yours to keep.

Send me a **FREE** issue at no obligation.

Name .....

Address .....

City .....

State/Zip .....

Clip and mail to ***The American Enterprise***, P.O. Box 2013, Marion, OH 43306-2013
or call 1-800-596-2319 or fax 614-382-5866

A05FTH

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

if the part-whole relationship of time and eternity is granted. This, in turn, is only possible if a trinitarian interpretation of time is offered. This is not to say that Pannenberg should be immune from criticism on any component; it is simply an observation that Pannenberg would have to reconstruct his entire system if he were to reevaluate the question of time....

Keith A. Snider
New Haven, CT

## Learning from Kierkegaard

I am concerned about the kind of polemical writing manifest in the pages of your journal. The *Shorter Oxford* defines polemics as "aggressive theological controversy," and it isn't too great a stretch from there to the notion of "culture wars." But like all just wars, culture wars must be prosecuted with a well-defined and edifying objective. As I understand it, the objective of Christian polemics is not defeat or humiliation of an enemy, but conviction and new life for all-too-human others.

The rules of engagement for this sort of "war" are rather unusual. Kierkegaard, an abrasively polemical warrior against secularism and liberalism, commented that "if real success is to attend the effort to bring a man to a definite position, one must first of all take pains to find *him* where he is and begin there." Preaching and prating don't work. He took his own advice, and his polemics still bite 150 years later.

FIRST THINGS has something to learn from Kierkegaard. Many of your authors look down from a great moral height on serious people who don't absolutely follow the party line. From this perspective we others apparently look rather as the citizens of Sarajevo do to snipers in the mountains: clear enough to be easy targets, and sufficiently dehumanized to be fired on impersonally. There isn't much engagement, nor hope of new life, in this sort of "polemics."

Such arbitrary sniping would be entirely appropriate, of course, if you were merely preaching to the choir—if your objective were to garner dittos by demonizing your enemies. But that I can't believe....

Charles Creegan
Rocky Mount, NC

## A Last Word on Dionysus

My essay on Dionysus in the May issue, originally entitled "Further Reflections...," grew out of David W. Murray's earlier comment ("Fleeing Nature: The Wild God on Campus," FT, December 1994), "Dionysus, who will not be mocked, represents our wild nature." I did not intend to advance insights into the god's meaning, but to muse upon and explore the implications of our "mocking" him by not attending to what he is commonly understood to represent.

This not attending, I wished to suggest, has something to do with the modern world's predictable shock whenever the Dionysian erupts—be it the casual drive-by killing, the gang rape, the My Lai massacre, the Oklahoma bombing, the Holocaust. Because our responses to these horrors are so consistently secular (better education, expanded social programs, intensified policing) we ignore the Dionysian which, in its disconcerting obscurity, suggests that the problem lies beyond our secular calculus. As Murray notes, it is dangerous to ignore this god.

This much I believe my article made clear. It escapes, I hope, David Kovacs' charge of "obnubilation" (Correspondence, August/September). I was less clear, however, on certain corollaries of the Dionysian—that, for example, despite his identification with violence and anarchy, our coming to terms with this god is also coming to terms with sexual and political responsibility (passion and power), and with that dimension of our identities contingent upon gender and genetics. I had hoped, obliquely, to show that we cannot be pro-choice about nature without violating nature. This much my musing and desultory presentation makes less clear and may indeed merit Kovacs' censure for attacking the obscure with the more obscure.

For my indefensible misspelling of Dionysus—a word I have read countless times obviously without "seeing" it—my sincere apologies to all concerned, not least of all, my old classics instructors. No apology, however, for my insistence upon attending to all that the Dionysian implies. Though he would be right to want better, David Kovacs is wrong to request "no more on Dionysus." While we need not sup with this devil, we ought to keep a close eye on him.

John J. Savant
San Rafael, CA

## The Other John Brown

Dennis Teti's "John Brown Redux," (April) was most enjoyable and right on the mark in its comparison of abortion and slavery. As a student of Civil War music, however, I would like to correct his statement about the song, "John Brown's Body."

"To the tune of 'Battle Hymn of the Republic,'" Mr. Teti says, "Union soldiers apotheosized Brown whose 'body lies a-mould'ring in the grave,' but whose 'soul goes marching on.'" Two points.

First of all, "John Brown's Body" predates the "Battle Hymn" by several months. In fact, it was written to the tune of a Methodist hymn called "On Canaan's Happy Shore."

Secondly, contrary to common belief, the song was not written about the abolitionist John Brown but about Sgt. John Brown of the 12th Massachusetts infantry. Sgt. Brown died in camp before the unit went to war. He had been a member of the regimental glee club and was memorialized by his comrades in the song.

When people first heard "John Brown's Body" they naturally assumed that it had been written about "Old Ossawatomie" Brown, an assumption that is now firmly, but wrongly, established in our historical and musical lore.

I have always thought that the men of the 12th must have gotten a kick out of that bit of mistaken identity that helped popularize the song they wrote for their friend.

James A. Morgan III
Lovettsville, VA

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THIS TIME

# Who's Stupid Now?

*James Nuechterlein*

John Stuart Mill famously dismissed conservatives as "the stupid party." He was writing in England during the nineteenth century, but his judgment would hold as well for much of the American experience in this century. Not literally, of course. The conservative deficiency had to do less with IQ than with social imagination. Contrast Robert A. Taft and Franklin D. Roosevelt: Taft, the quintessential anti-New Dealer, was almost certainly smarter than Roosevelt—the quip was that Taft had the best mind in the U.S. Senate until he made it up—but Roosevelt had a genius for politics that was beyond Taft's ken.

From the Progressive era onward, liberals regularly bested conservatives in the war of ideas. Theodore Roosevelt, who became leader of America's conservative party only by the tragic fluke of William McKinley's assassination, was rare among the Republicans in his political ingenuity, and after he left the political scene the GOP reverted to its customary position as the party of the dependable but stolid establishment. That position had served the party well in the late nineteenth century—when Republicans belittled the Democrats as "the organized incapacity of the nation"—and, with the exception of Woodrow Wilson's presidency, it continued to do so until the Great Depression.

For most of the next half century, however, liberalism set the intellectual and political agenda and flourished accordingly. The New Deal responded creatively to the economic downturn, and by its relative success seemed to establish its ideas as those best equipped to handle the challenges of modernity. As late as the mid-1960s the Great Society justified itself as the extension of the New Deal impulse into conditions of prosperity.

Republicans won occasional elections, but mostly under special conditions (Dwight Eisenhower won as a war hero) or when the Democrats handed them the victory (Richard Nixon won because of the liberal civil war over Vietnam). The Democrats remained the majority party—as reflected in their domination of Congress—and Republicans in power acted not to challenge the New Deal but simply to manage it more prudently. There is some evidence that Nixon meant to take on the left directly after his reelection in 1972, but Watergate made any such plans moot. (Watergate mattered, in my view, not as a constitutional crisis—it was never really that—but because it delayed for two decades a major political realignment.)

Beginning with Ronald Reagan's election in 1980, things have come pretty much full circle. It now makes a real difference when a Republican wins an election (well, all right, only partly so in the case of George Bush). Conservatives are brimming with ideas, and they mean to change the world. They are today not so much establishmentarians as counterrevolutionaries. The 1994 election gave the conservatives the intellectual and political initiative: the Contract with America, whatever one thinks of it ideologically, presents a political worldview unmatched in comprehensiveness since that of the early New Deal.

So today in America, Mill is turned on his head, and the liberals have become the stupid party. They respond as conservatives used to do, attacking their opponents as extremist and immoral, yet all the while conceding by their behavior the judgment that they can only win national elections by copying, in pastel tones, their opponents' program—which is precisely how both Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton won the White House and how Clinton is struggling to hold on to it.

Liberal true believers, meanwhile, are reduced in their chagrin to outraged moralizing and the endless repetition of the mantras of politics past. To read the editorial pages of the *New York Times* these days is to find oneself in a political time warp and to be reminded of the quip about the Bourbon restorationists to the effect that they had forgotten nothing and learned nothing. And just when it appears that today's liberals *have* learned something, it immediately slips their minds. Thus they will concede at one moment that the Great Society did indeed fail—and in the next breath attack any attempt to cut it back as heartless and retrograde. Or, in a cynical mood, they will placidly accept a Clinton proposal for a two-thirds cutback of a program even while denouncing the Republicans' three-quarters alternative as intolerably cruel to widows and orphans.

But if the stupid label has switched political location, conservatives should be wary of counting themselves too smart. As Irving Kristol has pointed out, "conservative 'stupidity,' properly understood, is intimately connected with sentiments that are at the roots of conservative virtues: a dogged loyalty to a traditional way of life . . . [and] an instinctive aversion to innovation based on mere theoretical speculation." Kristol goes on: "There is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

always a kind of immunity to fashionable politics . . . associated with conservatism, and a country that does not have a goodly portion of it is incapable of stable and orderly government. No political or social system can endure without engendering, in a perfectly organic way, this kind of conservative 'stupidity.' It is the antibody of the body politic."

To remind conservatives of the uses of stupidity is not necessarily to counsel "moderation" (in its customary political sense) in their rethinking of contemporary politics. As Kristol also notes, there are moments in all democratic societies when "fundamental questions of political philosophy emerge into the public forum and demand consideration." At those ideological moments, "stupidity" will not do and conservatives have to offer an articulate and forceful account of their notion of the public good and act on it. There is a widespread sense among Americans that a McGovernized liberalism did severe damage to our society, and it is an open question as to how thoroughgoing conservatism's response to the damage inflicted ought to be. One can as plausibly make a case in the present moment that conservatives should seize the day as that they should exercise moderation. That's a matter for prudential judgment, not appeal to first principles.

Yet in making that judgment, conservatives should remember that humility is as much an intellectual as a moral virtue and that one of the few absolutes of politics is the law of unintended consequences. Which is to suggest that conservative devolutionists—those who would allow individual states the greatest latitude in legislative experiment—ought to be attended to rather than those who favor a conservative regime decreed from Washington. In the progressive years prior to the New Deal, liberal states like Wisconsin were seen as "the laboratories of democracy." That is a good precedent to keep in mind. In politics as in science, there is much to be said for limited experiments prior to general application.

Beyond that, conservatives will always have at best ambivalent feelings toward radical change. Even when it is necessary for them to be counter-revolutionaries, they will be counterrevolutionaries looking to reassert themselves as the establishment. Unlike liberals, conservatives have no innate bias in favor of change as a good in itself. Their instinct is in fact the reverse. They become counter-ideologists, as their founder Edmund Burke did, only in hopes of minimizing the effect on politics of the ideological impulse. They yearn, with Michael Oakeshott, to restore that situation in which it is the task of the naturally ruling conservative party simply to "tend to the arrangements of society."

Which is to say that their preferred condition—always properly understood, of course—is political stupidity. FT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Opinion

## Spritely Ads

*J. Bottum*

There is a vague connection to vulgarity—there exists a tinge of logical association—when Calvin Klein advertises underwear by draping underclothed boys with girls who seem to tremble on the breathless edge of emphysema. Underwear suggests the body parts it covers, after all; those body parts suggest the sex for which they may be used; and sex, as every advertising executive knows, suggests cash purchase to the guileless and tender-minded. This chain of prurient suggestion—a sort of metonymic prostitution—is familiar to anyone who's ever seen TV. And though Calvin Klein's executives probably began the other way around (seeking a product they could hawk with bawdy pictures, and coming up with underwear), their product's connection to their advertising posters remains partially intelligible.

But posters advertising Sprite, the carbonated beverage distributed by Coca-Cola, appeared recently. And these posters, twisting the suggestive chain yet another kink, may have transcended Calvin Klein's weak insistence on intelligibility. These posters for the pixilated soft-drink may have found a suprarational impropriety, a *mysticism* of vulgarity. Off-kilter on a loud green background, above a tipsy cup of Sprite, reads Coca-Cola's latest jingle for its soft-drink: "More refreshing than a cool breeze up your shorts."

Coke once promoted Sprite, its ersatz Seven-Up, as clean and pure and innocent of caffeine—and consequently, by a simple inversion of libidinous allusion, as innocent of sexual awareness: to purchase a Sprite was to exchange the dirty and corrupt cash of adulthood for the innocent and clean delights of uncorrupted childhood. But, faced with clever advertising by its major competitors and with the inroads made in the soft-drink market by specialty brands, Coke has launched a new campaign for its product.

The problem is not so much that Sprite has no obvious connection to sex and impudently gusting breezes. Coke and Pepsi and their dozens of minor competitors decoct innumerable colas, none of which have obvious sexual connotation. But soft-drink manufacturers nonetheless can pitch their colas using the curvaceous Cindy Crawford or the hulking Lucky Vanous much as Calvin Klein uses the waifish Kate Moss or the absurdly striking Christy Turlington: to radiate the promise of limitless sexual arousal.

Of course, advertisers know they have not promised actual sex with Cindy Crawford, and the watching consumers know they have not been promised actual sex with Cindy Crawford. But with a humorous wink and a witting nudge—so intuitive has eroticism become—an advertiser lets its viewers know that it knows that they know that it knows what's up when Cindy Crawford sashays across a TV screen. The erotic chain is strong enough to withstand the play of considerable self-conscious, self-referential, self-abusing humor, and nearly every advertisement today titillates its voyeurs by playing with itself.

A history of ads for Coke reflects in many ways the social history of America—except that it is a history consistently one day behind the fair. Those Coca-Cola Gibson Girls, with their blowzy hair and pleated shirtfronts, were in their time as far behind fashion's fair as were the groovy boys and girls who wanted so to teach the world to sing long after the hippiedrome had closed its doors. Though the slogan was introduced in 1941, Coke remained "The Real Thing" some time after the adjective "real" had lost what little existential force it might once have had.

In recent years, while Seven-Up staked out cuteness and Pepsi staked out celebrity advertising, Coca-Cola has found no sure territory for its ads. Television viewers were treated to Coke-swigging polar bears last Christmas, as Coke discovered computer graphics two seasons late, and the current ad campaign reemphasizes the old, wasp-waisted bottle (itself a semi-sexualized relic of the early days of advertising's flirtation with the erotic), as Coke chases vainly after the departed wagon of nostalgia.

Like poor relations, Coca-Cola's subsidiary brands have always suffered a lack of identity as the colossus Coke mounted its heavy-footed ad campaigns. Once the flood of '80s diet drinks with '80s sweeteners swept away the saccharine Tab, Sprite remained Coke's most successful cousin. But it remained as well a product without much definition. A recent television campaign, showing a Sprite-drinking boy trounced by a professional basketball star, plays well against rival soft-drinks' sports-celebrity ads. But it cannot define any real image for the product.

With its new posters, however, Sprite hooks back on to titillation—and, in pure absurdity, stretches it beyond any rational association. What makes Sprite as refreshing as a cool breeze is its ostensibly thirst-quenching purity and innocence, and thus the old ad campaign's inversion of eroticism made a rough sort of sense. But though "purity" is still at least a partial-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ly marketable commodity, "innocence" is a term that no one's buying much these days. And so Sprite has kinked its ads one more time.

The point of the cool breeze wafting up your shorts is not that it is pointless (or especially refreshing), but that it recalls the connection between prurience and commercial products forged by countless previous advertisements. The ad doesn't promise anything about sex, it's just vulgar. It doesn't assert anything about the product, it's just lewd. It doesn't do anything at all but wink and say that the familiar suggestive chain does, by golly, still hold firm. And though Sprite has no intelligible connection to the chain, the joke which sells is that we know that Coca-Cola knows it—and Coca-Cola knows we know that Coca-Cola knows it, and knows . . . and knows. Knowledge has been liberated from conformity to constricting reference; Calvin Klein's slavish dependence on logical connection has been transcended by Coca-Cola. The postmodern promise that only texts exist—that a thousand words could be spent analyzing a single sentence without ever reaching reality—is at last fulfilled: suggestiveness is at last set free from any reference to actual sex or actual commercial product. Only the pure, connective vulgarity remains.

With a pair of tiny circled R's, however, Coca-Cola also proclaims that Sprite and Coke are trademarks of the Coca-Cola Company, properly registered with the U.S. government and protected by a very real law—violation of which is certain to be prosecuted. Some things Coke says are still intended to have reference; some small print on advertising posters is still meant to be the real thing.

J. BOTTUM *is Associate Editor of* FIRST THINGS.

# Dowsing in Scripture

*Alan Jacobs*

Folded into the corner of a comfortable old sofa, reading an equally comfortable old novel, I discovered an unoccupied corner of my mind with which to contemplate Wallace Stevens' great poem about reading: "The house was quiet and the world was calm." But almost at that moment it occurred to me that Stevens surely had no child in the house when he wrote that focused but tranquil line. *My* house was, according to the distressingly apt cliché, *too* quiet, and as I hauled myself up and lurched toward the bedroom, sliding in my socks on the oak floor, I had just a moment to wonder what my year-old son had destroyed and which of his preferred methods, dismemberment or ingestion, he had employed.

I found him sitting serenely in the middle of the bedroom with a Bible opened before him.

When he saw me he gave me a white, pulpy smile, but as I reached down, hand extended, he began twisting his head violently to keep me from digging out his chaw. Eventually I retrieved it and saw that it was a small piece, but the print had already dissolved, so I couldn't tell what he had torn out. I looked at the Bible, but the pages I could see were whole and apparently undefiled. Of course, I would have to find out; even in this most secular and unsuperstitious age, who can resist contemplating the prospect of a sign?

"Except ye see signs and wonders," said an exasperated Jesus, "ye will not believe." It was not a habit of which he approved: "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign," he warned—establishing the doctrine of universal human depravity, since it is not possible to imagine a generation of human beings which, by this standard, *fails* to be evil and adulterous. Given the choice between seeking signs with even the faintest of hope before us or settling for certain knowledge that no sign will ever come, who among us would choose the latter? To Jesus' charge we can only plead guilty and quickly resume scanning the skies for whatever may be read in the patterns of birds' flights, in the odd shooting star, in the somber processions of constellations, or in the banners towed over football stadiums by droning little airplanes.

Or, perhaps, in the Bible. Does anyone still do as I once did, and open Holy Writ at random, with closed eyes, solemnly dropping a finger onto the page? No one ever taught me to do it, as best I can remember, but it seemed natural and logical enough, as it has to many over the centuries. When Christianity was still a creed to be eradicated in Rome, futures were read in the pages of the *Aeneid*: later, these *sortes Virgilianae* (Virgilian lots) were replaced, quite predictably, by rituals involving a newly more authoritative tome. Edward Gibbon reports with characteristic wryness that "from the fourth to the fourteenth century, these *sortes sanctorum*, as they are styled, were repeatedly condemned by the decrees of councils and repeatedly practiced by kings, bishops, and saints."

I might add, for the benefit of future historians, that they were also condemned, and with admirable and disarming wit, by a Sunday School teacher in a Baptist church in Birmingham, Alabama, circa 1972.

"A fellow wanted to know whether he should marry his girlfriend," Mr. Hutchins told his wretched flock of imprisoned teenagers, "so he decided to see what the Bible had to say. He opened a page and put his finger on a spot"—at this point I emerged

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

from my usual stupor and sat up straight, never having suspected that anyone else did such a thing—"and it said, 'Judas went and hanged himself.' Well, he didn't like that too much, so he tried again. This time it said, 'Go thou and do likewise.'" A grin flickered. "So he tried one more time, closed his eyes, opened his Bible, put his finger on the page. . . ." Mr. Hutchins paused for effect, with his own Bible open in his lap, his head uplifted and eyes screwed shut, his finger wavering presciently over the surface of the page. Then, suddenly, the finger plunged like a dowsing rod, he popped open his eyes, and concluded: "And *this* time it said, 'What thou doest, do quickly!'"

Mr. Hutchins had confidence in the moral power of storytelling; he didn't say another word except to dismiss us. I repudiated my biblical dowsing—for several years, anyway. But I did wonder, as we traipsed off to the sanctuary for church, just what verse Mr. Hutchins' own finger had found as he told that story. Maybe his own destiny had been there for him to see, had he merely looked down. . . .

O evil and adulterous generation!

Yet, as Gibbon indicates, even the saints of the Church have sought God's will in this way. St. Augustine responded to the child's call—"Take up and read"—by reading the first biblical passage his eyes fell upon. St. Francis of Assisi and his companions, in the church of San Damiano, read three verses from the Gospels that became the foundation on which one of the great movements in the history of the Christian Church was built. If these great saints were weak, then God made concessions to their weakness; and if he could do it for them, why not for me?

Why not indeed? But to anticipate such concession is fatiguing; for that reason, I suppose, most of us eventually tire of watching for our own portentous and unmisinterpretable sign, the one that will point our way through life and settle once and for all those nagging questions about where our lives are heading. About the time such weariness sets in, however, many of us have children, and consequently shift our divinatory attentions toward their as yet unmarked lives. *Their* signs could still come—and thus my readiness to exercise all available hermeneutical energy upon the tableau I had discovered in the bedroom. But as I dug the sopping paper out of my son's mouth, I thought of a purely factual question: Who was the prophet who ate the scroll? A little later, when Wesley was napping, I got out my concordance and did some searching. Ah, yes. Ezekiel.

> And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and lo, a roll of a book was therein;
>
> And [the Lord] spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe.
>
> Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel.
>
> So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll.
>
> And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness.

It is an impressive performance, in its way, and yet the idea of Ezekiel as a role model for my little boy somehow failed to appeal. Ezekiel is notably harsh, even for a prophet. The Talmudic rabbis have surprisingly few words for him, and still less approval, perhaps because he presided over one of Israel's greatest catastrophes, the destruction of Jerusalem and the ensuing Babylonian captivity.

No. I didn't even want to think about what bringing another Ezekiel into the world might mean, for him or for the world. The concordance, however, directed me also to the New Testament—specifically, to the book of Revelation—but this (as might be expected) was no better. The roll St. John eats also tastes sweeter than honey, but all the pleasure is in the eating: later it gives him indigestion. Moreover, St. John apparently wrote from a Roman prison colony on the island of Patmos—a place that presents a prospect for Wesley's future no more appealing than Ezekiel's, though, if tradition is to be believed, he lived much longer than is common for prophets and apostles.

What does all this scroll-eating business mean anyway? I thought as I thumbed through some biblical reference books. Clearly these prophets loved the flavor of the word of God, though at least one came to find it disquieting later on. Both experiences were familiar to me, though not always in that order.

Many years ago I heard on the radio an old-fashioned, foot-stomping Bible teacher giving a talk on the importance of bringing the Gospel to the unbelievers. At the end there were questions, and someone asked whether, since unbelievers by definition didn't acknowledge the Bible as the Word of God, Christians should cite Scripture when seeking to convert them. The preacher had a ready answer: "Brothers and sisters, the Bible is the sword of the Spirit, so stick 'em with it anyway!" He was thinking of the Apostle Paul's injunction to spiritual warriors to "put on the whole armor of God," including the sword "which is the Word of God"; but he might also have remembered the author of the Letter to the Hebrews, who says that the word of God "is sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." In other words, it is as dangerous to the one who wields it as to the one against

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

whom it is wielded. Surely St. John had something of the kind in mind when he said that its original sweetness scarcely prepares the reader (or the eater) for the pain that comes afterward.

Another warning from Jesus tells us, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof"—there is no need to hunt for any extra. Is sign-hunting anything more than trouble-hunting? Clearly this whole *sortes sanctorum* business poses a problem, and, as I hinted earlier, over the years I seem to have lost interest in what it might tell me about my own future. Yet Wesley's little textual snack put me into a tizzy. However normal and natural it may be to shift our concern for the future from ourselves to our children, before Wesley's birth I never suspected just how persistently speculative one could become about that future.

So I sat down with that nibbled Bible, plus a whole one to identify what was missing, and started thumbing through the pages. After a few minutes I came across a torn corner, but my pulse quickened only until I saw what it was: the last chapter of Leviticus, with some commandments about how priests may set the value of certain unclean beasts that are brought before the Lord. I frowned, unable to find a connection. But then I realized that a very obvious fact had escaped me: book pages are printed on both sides. And on the other side was the first chapter of Numbers, in which Yahweh tells Moses to number all the eligible fighting men of Israel, in preparation for the forthcoming war against the Canaanites.

I sat there for a few moments, thinking about war, and history, thinking too about the character of Yahweh. But then Wesley woke from his nap. I walked slowly to his room, and opened the door more quietly than necessary. He was standing in his crib, and babbled smilingly at me when I entered. I picked him up and held his cheek against mine and thought, Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. O evil and adulterous generation.

ALAN JACOBS *teaches English at Wheaton College in Illinois.*

# Wilsonian Dream, Bosnian Reality

*A. J. Bacevich*

When the definitive catalogue of twentieth-century horrors is assembled, the agonies endured by Bosnia in the 1990s are unlikely to rate many pages. It's been that kind of century.

Yet the ongoing debacle in Bosnia—more specifically, the utter ineffectiveness of U.S. efforts to end the conflict there—stings Americans as no other event in the brief time after the Cold War. Bosnia is an affront. The suffering of innocents resulting from the break-up of Yugoslavia afflicts our conscience. The cynicism of loathsome politicians who fan ethnic hatred in pursuit of petty ambitions fills us with disgust.

But however disturbing the grisly images beamed into our living rooms from Sarajevo and however despicable the latest reported machinations of such Bosnian Serb leaders as the toad-like Radovan Karadzic, outrage alone does not explain the extent to which this particular crisis has disconcerted the United States. Bosnia rankles because the intractability of the problems manifested there mocks the premises of modern American diplomacy. To examine the Bosnian crisis squarely and honestly is to understand that the entire Wilsonian enterprise, the cornerstone of American diplomacy since the United States entered upon the world stage, faces collapse today.

As Americans, we are all Wilsonians—just as we are all Jeffersonians. While we may be selective in drawing on Jefferson's view of democracy, we nonetheless rely heavily on it; Jefferson's vision of liberty and equality is intrinsic to our definition of nationhood. Similarly, in matters of foreign policy, although we are not uniformly enamored with the more extreme expressions of missionary diplomacy, virtually every American accepts the proposition that American political ideals are universal in application. With few exceptions, we assume that those ideals and values are destined to encompass the globe.

Indeed, ever since the U.S. entered World War I, this expectation has been central to the way that Americans have viewed the world; whatever the trials and tribulations of the moment, history would in the end propel others to embrace our values. American power and American ideals would transform international politics, leading to that Lasting Peace Woodrow Wilson and his successors routinely claimed as the ultimate reward of the nation's exertions.

Thus, when at Wilson's urging the United States flung itself into World War I, the President did not justify the departure from America's tradition of so-called isolationism as necessary to secure vital national interests. Instead, he cast America's purpose in cosmic terms. In his war message to Congress of April 2, 1917, for example, Wilson declared German aggression to be a threat not simply to the United States but to humanity itself. Germany, he said, had embarked upon a policy of waging "warfare against mankind. It is a war against all nations." Yet even the overthrow of this evil power was not in itself sufficient to justify American participation in the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

war. Rather, in Wilson's famous formulation, America would fight to make the world "safe for democracy." America, he vowed, must fight "for democracy . . . for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free"—the very purposes, according to Wilson, "we have always carried nearest our hearts."

In a cynical age, when the presumption of duplicity taints even the mildest use of lofty rhetoric, it requires a real exercise in historical imagination to appreciate the impact of Woodrow Wilson's summons of America to a world mission. But in 1917 the President's desperate conviction—for he hated war and could accept its necessity only for purposes that approached the transcendent—and the popular American susceptibility to the imagery of salvation invested Wilson's summons with extraordinary power.

Of course, the Wilsonian crusade failed. Far from discrediting Wilson's vision, however, failure somehow seemed to validate it. Wilson's insistence that for Americans the struggle for peace and worldwide liberty defined the cause "nearest our hearts" became enshrined as prescient and profound. Although rejected, Wilson himself became a mythic figure, a prophet abandoned and betrayed by small-minded men of ill will. Textbooks provided to later generations of American school children often claimed that his betrayal had made inevitable a second and even more terrible war.

For Wilsonians, that war provided a much anticipated "second chance." Once again, Americans were called upon to resist monstrous evil. Wilson's political heirs in World War II hastened to revive his assurances that American sacrifices in this conflict would purchase permanent world peace.

Despite the triumph over Nazi Germany and imperial Japan, however, peace again failed to materialize—frustrated this time by a Cold War the Wilsonians had not anticipated. And yet, to its proponents, this second failure did not mean that the Wilsonian enterprise itself had failed. That the world would make only halting progress toward redemption—that in the ensuing decades violence, avarice, vanity, and iniquity continued to mark the conduct of international affairs—simply suggested that Wilson's prophetic vision would remain unfulfilled until the end of the Cold War itself.

Suddenly, at the end of the 1980s with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Wilsonian moment seemed at hand. Long-stalled, the march toward peace could now resume. At long last, American power and American ideals would work their magic, culminating (so we were advised) in the creation of a New World Order under the benevolent direction of the United States.

A bare half-dozen years later, the very idea seems laughable. The phrase "New World Order" has become an object of derision. More importantly, the entire Wilsonian premise—that by eliminating monstrous evil America's power would permit a world hungry for peace to find salvation in American ideals—has begun to appear preposterous. Nowhere is this more clearly the case than in Bosnia, where the face of evil is not so much monstrous as contemptible, yet where evil remains as persistent and as unyielding as human nature itself.

In a performance that would undoubtedly have embarrassed and angered Woodrow Wilson, the United States has waffled and temporized over Bosnia, attempting to get by with half measures. Yet the uncertainty that has marked the American response to that crisis does not arise from confusion regarding the moral and political issues being contested there. Nor does American hesitation in employing its power in Bosnia reflect any serious disagreement regarding the operational risks and requirements of such an undertaking. Rather, uncertainty and hesitation have risen from the recognition—now impossible to suppress—that even massive intervention in Bosnia would solve very little. Although the United States undoubtedly possesses the capability to end the conflict, the Wilsonian goal of securing the "universal dominion of right" appears infeasible for the former Yugoslavia. Transforming the Balkans—just the Balkans, not the entire planet—exceeds the capability of the world's only superpower.

The dilemma that the United States faces in Bosnia exemplifies the larger dilemma of post-Cold War American foreign policy. In the real world (rather than the world of Wilsonian delusions), diplomacy involves choosing from among various imperfect alternatives to achieve limited purposes. This does not mean that any use of American power becomes an exercise in futility. Employing that power judiciously, case by case, the United States can—though never without substantial cost—punish some evil-doers, thwart some aggressors, and ameliorate the suffering of some oppressed people. Even if such an effort succeeds, however, the United States is sure to be confronted the next day with evil in some fresh incarnation, with new threats of disorder, and with yet further instances of humanitarian catastrophe to tug at our conscience. To pretend otherwise is to commit the United States to waging—in the words of an early and much reviled critic of Wilsonian pretensions—"perpetual war for perpetual peace." Down that road lies only frustration, exhaustion, and failure. Simple prudence demands that the United States craft its policies and establish its priorities accordingly.

Yet accepting the irrevocable failure of America's

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

redeeming mission, acknowledging the blunt fact that American ideals will not transcend politics, does not come easily. The Wilsonian conceit that America can bend history to suit its will has conferred psychic and substantive rewards not willingly surrendered. It has permitted a nation given to seeing itself as historically unique to indulge in the proposition that it can enjoy the prerogatives of being a Great Power and yet remain above the squalid nastiness inherent in the actual exercise of power. It has enabled a foreign policy establishment long since grown lazy and complacent to sustain extraordinary popular deference by proclaiming itself sole arbiter of the practical implications of the Wilsonian enterprise.

Shorn of the grandeur of Wilsonian idealism, United States foreign policy loses its presumptive claim to moral superiority. Americans are left to contemplate the unwelcome realization that American exceptionalism—at least on the world stage—is illusory. No longer able to justify American diplomacy in terms of some pretentious obligation to humankind, foreign policy experts intent on making a case for intervening in places like Bosnia must devise a new rationale in a new vocabulary. Making such a case is not easy—and should not be.

Divesting the United States of its infatuation with Wilsonianism does not legitimize amoral statecraft. But only by stripping American policy of its Wilsonian fig leaf can the United States take a first step toward seeing the true dimensions of the challenge it faces in a turbulent post-Cold War world: that of a democracy and a superpower whose behavior must somehow reconcile both moral and pragmatic imperatives. If nothing else, Bosnia suggests just how daunting that challenge is likely to be.

A. J. BACEVICH *is Executive Director of the Foreign Policy Institute at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, D.C.*

# A Contract with the Churches?

*Robert Benne*

The amazing Republican victory in the election of 1994 has prompted many commentators to suggest that we are experiencing a populist resurgence of the first order. The Republicans have captured what Jeffrey Bell has called "the populist stream of opinion" and are possibly presiding over a political realignment. If the Republicans hold their gains in Congress and capture the Presidency in 1996 they will pull off what, in a democratic society, is the equivalent of a revolution.

In the political sphere, then, we are witnessing the people exerting their will. To employ the famous image of Peter Berger, the Indians (the many ordinary Americans who are religious) are in the process of throwing out the Swedes (the governing class who are pervasively secularist.) In our society in general we sense the growing mistrust of the headquarters of anything—government, media, church, business, or school. Indeed, the sensitivity to this mistrust is so sharp that a telephone operator at our national church headquarters corrected me when I called it "headquarters." She suggested I call it "church-wide offices."

But what of the churches? Shouldn't there be signs of a "people's movement" in the churches, especially the mainstream Protestant churches? After all, there are fascinating parallels between the practices—now being rejected—of the federal government and the practices of the mainstream Protestant denominations. Here are a few examples to ponder, examples drawn mainly from my own church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, but which could apply to many mainstream churches.

First, there are the irritants and outrages of the regulatory state. The federal government has spun a thousand spiderwebs of ensnaring regulation. So has the church. The ELCA, begun in 1988, wanted so badly to be a "new church" that it produced detailed regulations imposing racial, ethnic, and gender quotas on the entire organized life of the church. These quotas are supposed to guarantee "inclusiveness." They unfortunately include among the formerly "excluded" a menagerie of self-described "victims," self-marginalized complainers, and self-conscious heretics—all now required by the regulatory church to be represented at every table of deliberation. The spirit of interest group liberalism pervades every nook and cranny of the church. So it is that traditional Lutheranism becomes just one of many perspectives—alongside feminism, multiculturalism, and political correctness—to be taken into account in the affairs of the regulatory church.

Sometimes the regulations are very subtle and informal. The prime example here is the move to "inclusive language." The switch to gender-neutral or inclusive language with regard to human beings took place at least a decade ago. But now the regulations have been expanded to exclude the use of any masculine pronouns for God. (None of this has been debated or formally legislated; it has been done by "executive order.") "Father" can be used in the trinitarian formula, the creeds, and the Lord's—or should I say "Sovereign's"—Prayer, but scarcely anywhere else. Church publishing houses, journals, and magazines now are thoroughly sanitized of the offending

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pronouns. Worship materials slavishly follow the new regulations and are visited on the unsuspecting laity without comment or debate. Seminaries give these regulations real muscle by enforcing inclusive language on all students. The "pronoun snippers" are having their way.

Another focus of the present populist resentment in politics is the suspicion that the government undermines the virtue of the people, turning them into dependent clients of the custodial state by not affirming crucial public values concerning sexual ethics, marriage and family life, work and citizenship. A corresponding suspicion is held of the mainstream Protestant churches. Ordinary lay people have the sense that the headquarters elite continually subvert their core values, either through loss of courage and clarity or through outright contempt. It is difficult to imagine any of the mainstream churches vigorously promoting chastity with the slogan "True Love Waits," as the Baptists have. They would be embarrassed to say something so clear and direct.

Rather, the good liberals who control most church headquarters have trouble saying "no" or setting clear limits. In some cases, for example with regard to homosexual behavior and sex before marriage, they constantly agitate for changes that directly challenge the traditional values of the laity. The notorious 1993 ELCA draft on human sexuality is a perfect case in point. It is no wonder that laity often consider the church headquarters an enemy of their Christian convictions.

Meanwhile, sexual sins by the clergy are ferreted out and prosecuted with unrelenting fury. Serious cases of unfaithfulness, which ought to be severely punished, are mixed with more minor violations that often bring draconian punishment. And since the perpetrator is always male, the offense is never a shared sinful act with the "victim," but a "hegemonic abuse of power." Old-fashioned lust, often reciprocated by the victim, is no longer recognized as a motivation. "Sin" is out, "abuse of power" is in.

The Republican victory of 1994 seemed to strike a blow against increased growth of the central government and for the shifting of political power to state and local levels. The voters expressed their conviction that growth in the federal government was not paying off in increased effectiveness. Taxpayers were paying more but getting less. A similar suspicion floats among the laity of the mainstream churches. Regarding the national church's crucial tasks of foreign and home missions, we are clearly paying more but getting less. The ratio of bureaucrats to actual overseas missionaries keeps climbing. National staffs keep huffing and puffing, but there are fewer home mission starts each year. Meanwhile, interest group concerns—commissions on women and multiculturalism—continue to soak up funds.

One of the first actions of the victorious Republicans was the Congressional Reforms Accountability Act. Among its provisions was the requirement that Congress submit to the same federal rules and regulations that the people have to observe. This legislation was met with great approval; even the Democrats said they would have done the same thing. Such is not the case in the church. After widespread agitation to get rid of quotas, the ELCA Conference of Bishops held that the "representational principles" of the ELCA should continue. The Bishops do not accept, however, that "representational principles" should govern the election of bishops. They remain overwhelmingly white males and do not wish to have quotas applied to them. Neither do I, of course, but why are they immune to a system to which everyone else must bow?

One could point to many other parallels. Taxation without representation, unfunded mandates, and unnecessary bureaucratic inefficiency all exist in the church. But why is there no populist upheaval?

The first thing to note is that there is at least populist resistance, if resistance means that people are keeping their money close to home. Giving to local congregations has gone up along with inflation, but local parishes are not sending proportional monies to regional judicatories, which in turn are not sending as much to national organizations. Thus, the famous shrinkage of all mainstream headquarters. (This is also happening among more conservative churches, but they have traditionally been more congregational in polity than the mainstream ones.)

Few leaders among the mainstream churches have responded to this shrinkage by altering their behavior. One reason may be the "softness" of the systems of accountability in the churches. The churches, like the schools, are relatively invulnerable to popular pressures because their main actors are not accountable to the direct vote as in the political realm or the direct dollar as in economic life. Leadership often resides in well-insulated bureaucracies not directly responsive to votes or dollars. That is why they can maintain theological and political orientations far different from their grassroots membership.

Given this elite recalcitrance, why has there been no real effort to "throw the rascals out," as there has been in national and state politics? Why have church locals not tried to "take back" their church as American locals have tried to "take back" their government? Even given the lack of direct accountability, there must be some deeper reason why populist concerns do not powerfully affect the church. Alas, the sad reason is that most mainstream church members simply do not think that the larger church is important enough to merit close attention. The various delinquencies of church headquarters just don't affect the people in the pews enough to get them

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stirred up. Once in a while, when the media magnify issues such as those surrounding sexual ethics, the troops respond and demands arise for reform and accountability. But most of the time life goes on as usual at the parish level. And pastors generally maintain peace by keeping the laity blissfully ignorant of the shenanigans occurring at the church headquarters.

The populist revolt can only begin in earnest when and if pastors decide to mobilize their laity in a self-conscious movement within the church. But rather than lead such a movement, many pastors would prefer to "go independent"—something that is likely to happen much more frequently if things continue as they are.

All this, however, is not to suggest that a populist movement in the churches would necessarily be a good thing. "The people" are not automatically any more trustworthy than the elite. What is trustworthy is the Holy Spirit working through the authoritative tradition of the Church. But much of that tradition has been eroded by rampant individualism among the laity and malfeasance among the elite. Real hope for a mainstream church such as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America resides in a repentant centering on the confessional tradition that has held Lutheranism together for these last four centuries. Hope for the future of the church is only to be found among those of its adherents—laity and elite alike—who have a sure grasp of its tradition.

ROBERT BENNE *is Jordan-Trexler Professor of Religion at Roanoke College and author, most recently, of* The Paradoxical Vision: A Public Theology for the Twenty-First Century *(Fortress).*

## ON THE OTHER HAND

# Military Necessities

*Peter L. Berger*

In a recent issue of the *Spectator*, the spunky British conservative magazine, there were two articles on aspects of the military culture of the United Kingdom. One, by Alasdair Palmer, dealt with attitudes toward homosexuals in the British army. The other, by Noel Malcolm, discussed the pro-Serbian bias of British government statements on the Bosnian conflict and of senior British soldiers serving with the United Nations forces in Bosnia. The two articles address quite discrepant issues, yet in an interesting way they belong together, and their common if not immediately obvious topic is relevant to every Western democracy. That topic is the character of the military today.

Palmer records the strong anti-homosexual sentiments in the British military and the strong conviction among British professional soldiers that the presence of homosexuals undermines the morale of the troops. Palmer has no sympathy with these sentiments and beliefs. He claims that there is no evidence concerning the alleged damage to military morale, a claim about which one might raise some questions. But he also makes the telling point that, if sexual attraction and sexual play are a morale issue, the presence of women in the armed forces constitutes a much bigger problem than the presence of homosexuals. In support of this point he might have cited recent revelations about the number of pregnancies incurred by women serving on American battleships and about incidents of illicit heterosexual behavior in various branches of the American military.

Malcolm's article has nothing to do with sex, gay *or* straight. He shows how official British pronouncements on the Bosnian conflict tend toward a position of moral equivalency between the aggressors and the victims (a tendency that has also characterized a number of official American statements). This bias has an obvious political function. It serves to legitimate the weak response of the Western powers to the Serbian aggression: If the Bosnian government is no better than its Serbian enemies, a stronger Western response is not indicated. But Malcolm makes another point, which links it to Palmer's theme. It appears that British officers have developed a sense of "military camaraderie" (Malcolm's phrase) with their Serbian counterparts. In a not-so-subliminal way, these officers identify with the swashbuckling characters on the Serbian side.

Implicit in these two articles is a very important issue: What kind of military do we want to have in our Western democracies? And what kind of military do we need?

One does not have to disagree with the democratic doctrine concerning civilian control of the armed forces or with the ideal of a citizens army to recognize a simple fact: the defining purpose of the military is to kill enemies. Anthropologists continue to argue whether homicidal aggression is intrinsic to human nature, but it is fairly evident that people raised in societies softened by philanthropic moralities have some difficulty turning themselves into killers (or, at any rate, most of them do). They have to be trained to do so. Perhaps, if some anthropologists are right, this may not have been necessary for roving bands of warriors in Neolithic times. It is certainly necessary in modern Western societies, as any drill sergeant in basic training camps will testify.

Consequently, a distinctive military ethos has

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

developed in modern times. It has put constraints on the murderous impulses of the warrior band, introducing values of honor and chivalry, and these values have been codified in such internationally recognized expressions of *ius in bello* as the Geneva Conventions on the treatment of prisoners and noncombatants. But this military ethos has nevertheless preserved the intrinsic character of the bond that holds together a group of human beings committed to lethal violence and prepared to risk their lives in this enterprise. The more reflective interpreters of this ethos have been very much aware of the moral dilemmas it may entail. A classic expression of this awareness is Alfred de Vigny's novel *The Military Necessity*; on a lesser literary level, Herman Wouk's novel *The Caine Mutiny* and the play and film based on it illustrate the same moral tension.

There can be no doubt that this same military ethos included a cult of virility. The bonded group of warriors have always been a group of *men*, in an emphatically macho sense of the word. One may well suspect that there are biological reasons for this, but, be that as it may, the link between the warrior spirit and an ideal of blustering maleness is deeply grounded. There was a song current among mercenaries in the Thirty Years' War that began with the line "We are a horde of ten thousand swine." This may not be a morally attractive sentiment, but it accurately reflects an important psychological ingredient of "military necessity." Like it or not, a measure of swinishness has been intrinsic to what makes soldiers tick. Military professionals know this instinctively; the politicians who dictate policies to them rarely do. And, like it or not, the majority of those who feel at home in these putatively swinish hordes are uneasy (at the very least) if homosexuals want to join; they are equally uneasy, or even more so, with the presence of women.

To avoid misunderstanding, I want to inject a personal observation here. I have never had the slightest problem with the presence of homosexuals in any setting in which I found myself. And I have always disliked all-male groups (they have for me the unpleasant odor of the locker room). By the same token, I would always have made a lousy soldier. The time I spent as a draftee in the U.S. Army (luckily for me, after the Korean war and before the one in Vietnam) was probably the single most miserable episode in my life.

I vividly recall two scenes from my basic training at Fort Dix, New Jersey. One was bayonet training. We were taught to run at the dummy, plunge the bayonet into its belly, then put our foot into what (if there were a man rather than a dummy) would now have been a mortal wound and jerk the bayonet out again. While we were going through this exercise, we were supposed to yell. I managed the physical part of it, more or less, but I never learned to yell with sufficient enthusiasm.

The other scene was back in the barracks. The lavatory had no dividing walls between the toilets. The men would sit there, noisily defecating in unison, while they exchanged obscene jokes and (probably mendacious) accounts of their own sexual adventures. Or, I should say, *many* of the men did. Others, myself included, avoided these happy squatting sessions and frequented the lavatory when it was less populated. I have no doubt which group was better fitted for the military.

Now, a good case can be made that much of the present-day military no longer requires the old ethos. Its methods of warfare are highly technological, and its organization is heavily bureaucratized. During my own unheroic term of service in the 1950s there was a noticeable antagonism between the old professional types and the careerists of the "New Army." Since then the military in all Western countries has become much more technologized and much more bureaucratized, but, as far as I can tell, there continues to be a core group of soldiers, most of them in combat units, who continue to identify with the old ethos and who feel dislike if not contempt for those who are more proficient in public relations than in ramming bayonets into enemy bellies. It is clear that the latter group has few problems with homosexuals or with women serving alongside them, or at any rate no more problems than any comparable male group in civilian occupations. They have also had no problem applying to military life the demented notions of "sexual harassment" foisted on the rest of society by the likes of Pat Schroeder. By the same token, we may safely assume, they are not tempted to a sense of "military camaraderie" with ferocious Serbs in the mountains of Bosnia.

Leaving aside for the moment both moral judgments and personal preferences in lifestyle, we are led by these considerations to a very simple question: What kind of military is needed today by Western democracies? If the only military interventions we can envisage in the future are of the high-tech sort, then we can dispense with the old ethos—including the cult of virility and the swinishness that have always gone with it. Contemporary Britain or America can produce only a limited number of individuals who will charge enthusiastically with a bayonet. But just about any Briton or American can push a button that will send a missile against an unseen adversary. Straights or gays can, men or women can, even people like me can. And the relations between those engaged in this kind of warfare need be no different from relations between people in any other technological or bureaucratic line of work.

I have no expertise in strategic analysis. I strongly suspect, though, that this will not be the only type of military intervention that the interests of Western democracies will call for in the future, especially in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the wake of the Cold War. If so, the future will look more like the Bosnian conflict than the 1991 blitzkrieg in the Gulf. In that case, there must be men with bayonets, taking ground and holding it. If the Western democracies lack such men in their militaries, they will be severely limited in their responses to aggression.

PETER L. BERGER *is Director of the Institute for the Study of Economic Culture at Boston University.*

## Sodomites

All day he's tasted it.
Last night too.
His eyes burning,
like the city where
smoke still chars the sky.

History will not record
exactly how it was.
Some perhaps will grasp
wisps of the story.

He knows his part.
She looked back.
He yearned to.
You cannot live so long together
and not lean into the other,
longing having grown
like twin trees.

Memories,
Not all smoke—nor tears—
but glintings and illuminations
and laughter as well.

He offered his daughters.
Brassy offenders, these men
would not take common desserts.
Like most, they desired to rise—
the closest to truth they'd come.

But, how different was the heart
that offered his daughters?
Not all desires acted—
seeking—
the numinous everywhere.

Having to face deserts again,
he turns from his wife—
a salt lick for cattle,
his head a brazier.

**Thomas Ramey Watson**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# A Jew in Anti-Christian America

***Midge Decter***

To speak of something called "Christian America," as both the advocates and the opponents of this idea are nowadays at high levels of passion wont to do, is by itself evidence of how *un*-Christian the country has become. Many Christian activists, especially the most innocent and high-minded among them, seem not to understand the true nature of their underlying predicament. We are, for instance, constantly being reminded by those who have an interest in declaring the robustness of Christianity in America today that such-and-such a high percentage of Americans are to be found in church each Sunday and that an even higher percentage profess to believe in God; and while such numbers surely do not mean nothing, the very fact that the Christian party so often needs to invoke them is evidence that the religious enterprise, for all its vaunted majority status, is in a deeply defensive mode.

When I was young—which, at least as history reckons these things, is after all not all that long a time ago—everyone, Jew and Christian alike, would in fact have been puzzled by the term "Christian America," puzzled in much the same sense as a fish might be puzzled by the idea of "ocean." What other America was there? Christians did not think about it, and Jews imagined no alternative. (Islam, of course, and Buddhism were in those years strictly the *Arabian Nights* to most Americans: for one thing, oil was cheaper than water, so who really cared about Islam? and the fascination of the young of the 1960s with exotic spirituality was still quite beyond imagining.) There were only two religious possibilities, Christianity and Judaism, and no honest person on either side of this divide was in any doubt about the status of the latter as a minority on sufferance. On the whole benignly treated, to be sure, but in need of tolerance nonetheless.

MIDGE DECTER *recently retired as Distinguished Fellow of the Institute on Religion and Public Life. This essay originated as the 1995 Erasmus Lecture, which is sponsored by the Institute.*

Back in the period I am talking about, the 1930s and 1940s, Jews living in the major population centers of American Jewish life—New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, and so on—might at least in some part of their daily lives have experienced a sense of cultural dominance: in their neighborhoods, on their blocks, most people lived as they did, and spoke as they did, and viewed the world as they did. Thus the shock of recognizing their status as a drop in a bucket might have come to them a bit later than to others of their fellow Jews living more scattered throughout the country. In any case, for the timid and the wounded of the ghettoized big-city Jewish community, the home enclave could always be a safe haven to remain in; and indeed many then did (and to this day some still do) remain there.

But for many other Jews, who, like me, grew up in what has come to be called the American heartland—namely, small to medium cities in the Middle West—there was never a safe haven; as children we pretty much sank or swam, socially speaking, among the majority. At least, that is, until some point in middle-to-late adolescence, when thoughts of marriage began to intrude—in those days most people married at a sensible early age before too much consciousness set in—and one way and another Jewish boys and girls, whether by instinct or external pressure, joined together in a kind of separate social entity. (I do not speak here about Jews in the South, who lived perpetually between the hammer and the anvil and who must have been so constricted by the experience that to this day not a single serious Jewish novelist has risen from that literature-soaked land to tell us about it.) For us as children, Christmas and Easter, to take only the gaudiest and most public examples, were not only major events in school, undertaken with full and unself-conscious panoply—and, be it noted, without even a hint of a glance at Hanukkah and Passover—but even more important,



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

they were events in the households of all those among whom we lived day to day, our neighbors and our neighbors' neighbors, as well. Christian observances were part of our street life and part of the civic life of our communities.

My own home town, St. Paul, was a predominantly Catholic city, with a sizable minority of Scandinavian Lutherans. Just across the river was our "twin" city, Minneapolis, which back then touted itself among other things as the capital of the Bible Belt and whose radio stations, in earnest of this claim, carried a more than modest number of fundamentalist preachers. (You might have thought that the Bible Belt was actually somewhat to the south of Minnesota, but that didn't bother the Minneapolitans, who staked their claim all the same, just as travelers to my own city across the river were greeted by a sign that read "Welcome to St. Paul, Gateway to the Great Northwest.") I offer these data about the respective religious compositions of the two cities with the consciousness of now; back then distinctions of this kind would have largely escaped me and, I think, most of my fellow twin cities Jews as well. In other words, they, the others, Catholics, Protestants, were truly one big "they"—some more agreeable than others; some truly one's friends, some not—and it was unmistakably *their* terrain on which *we* were living.

If all this added up to certain kinds of discomfort that would have seemed somewhat peculiar to our Eastern big-city cousins—childhood friendships, for example, that unspokenly and mysteriously evaporated in adolescence—in some respects we were also far more at ease than they. A few years ago someone published a book about Brooklyn in the early years of the century, and in this book is to be found a positively gripping photograph: a group of Jewish boys and girls, say about eight or nine years old, from their dress clearly the children of immigrants, standing in a line that stretches down what looks to be a whole city block. They are waiting, the photo caption tells us, to get into . . . the neighborhood public library. How much venturing away from the warm comforts of home and into the far-off precincts of American, and beyond American, Western, civilization that photograph speaks of—how much fearful striving, how much passion, how much longing to get out and get away, are these children to be letting themselves in for! (For some, of course, there would be reward beyond measure; and for others, there would be only a lifetime of a kind of chronic, low-grade disaffection.)

But we out there in our heartland cities, we did not have to venture to find America—we were living totally, if not without a certain self-consciousness, in it. And because we were not driven, so to speak, to find our way to the library, like most of the middle Americans among whom we lived we tended to be a little smug and more than a little provincial. The boosterism once so grossly though alas not altogether unrecognizably caricatured by Sinclair Lewis was no less a besetting sin of St. Paul's Jewish than of its Christian inhabitants. And as for provinciality, that is a quality of being best illustrated for me by the story of my introduction to Mr. Roy Wilkins (for many long years, before its descent into shame, the wise and sturdy leader of the NAACP). We met at a dinner party, and as we sat sipping martinis and seeking, as people do, some way into conversation, we discovered that we had grown up in the same city. He was quite a bit older than I, and when I sought to discover if we nevertheless had any acquaintances in common, I asked him what street he had lived on. He told me the name of the street and of the school he had gone to, and when he did so, I realized that I had never once in all my life set foot on that street or laid eyes on that school—this in a city whose population when I lived there was not much more than 200,000!

Meanwhile, as the old song has it, back in the jungle—which was in this case a land called Germany—there were Hitler and his minions, revving up among other things to alter the course of Jewish history forever. In the comfort of our American existence we were aware that Hitler was doing evil things to Jews, first in Germany and next in Central and Eastern Europe; we would not for a few years—in some cases not till the end of the war in Europe—know just exactly how evil, but what we already knew by the late 1930s was bad enough.

Now, though our lives were pleasant, we were not, of course, growing up entirely ignorant of the experience of anti-Semitism. The preachments wafted through the airwaves from Minneapolis, for instance, were more than liberally salted with reminders of Jewish malfeasance, some of which I found rather difficult to grasp (and do to this day, I might add). There was Father Coughlin of Detroit, to whom we sometimes listened and whose accusations against us were considerably less arcane than those of our fundamentalist radio interlocutors. And then, of course, there were the boys from Nativity school, just a block from our own, who would now and then spice up their boyish tauntings on our common way home with the charge that I had murdered their Lord and other such pleasantries. But public humiliations, beatings and dispossessions, and unspeakable concentration camps—all this certainly had nothing to do with us and seemed more akin to those old stories of Eastern Europe offered in explanation of why our forebears came here to this promising land in the first place.

There was, however, one difference between the fate of our parents and grandparents and that of those 1930s and 1940s Jews of Europe: and that is, that the doors of the United States were no longer wide open. Some of the Jews of Germany and Austria got out while the getting was good and one way and another were taken in here. But when the Blitzkrieg moved East, engulfing in its murderous maw not

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

only millions of innocents but a whole rich, thick, various, and teeming Jewish culture—"hurling into silence," as Harold Rosenberg once put it in an essay on Adolf Eichmann, "so many of the subtlest and most humane minds of Europe"—there would be no escape. (But what would we do with a million Jews? was the response of the British foreign office when an intermediary brought an offer from Eichmann to exchange the lives of a million Jews for some trucks and materiel.) So though the war would be over before we knew, or admitted to ourselves, just how bad things had been with our European cousins, we were not for a moment permitted to be unmindful that the world had become a murderous place for a large proportion of its Jews.

I realize that I am here touching upon what has become to our friends the most nagging and tiresome of all Jewish points of reference, namely, the Holocaust. But it is impossible to understand what has become of America's Jews, culturally as well as politically, without understanding our experience of those immediately prewar and wartime years—without, to put the case in far too crude but convenient shorthand, understanding the role played by Franklin D. Roosevelt in our communal fantasy life.

Though the New Deal was itself certainly of major importance to the political formation of what has come to be known as the organized Jewish community, for many if not most Jews Roosevelt's greatness lay not so much in the fact that he was a liberal in opposition to conservatives as it did in the fact that in the face of Nazi Germany he was an interventionist in firm and successful opposition to the isolationists. The isolationist party, best known by the name of America First, was in fact a jumble of people with a whole variety of agendas: there were those who believed that the United States should have no truck with Europe and its wars, there were socialists who found nothing to choose among the imperialists on both sides, and there were those who believed that Germany's was not necessarily the wrong side to be on, this latter group itself being a kind of odd amalgam of Anglophobes, anti-Semites who said that the war against Hitler was merely a Jewish war, and immigrant German patriots. Except for a tiny handful of, to put it mildly, deracinated radicals, American Jews knew World War II to be overridingly a moral war and they were entirely certain that Roosevelt knew it too.

There were of course other sources of the Jews' loyalty to Roosevelt: primarily, I think, that Jews, even those originally from the remotest villages in Eastern Europe, were in their inmost cultural being an urban people, and Roosevelt was the President of the cities: patrician and alien of background though he might be, he somehow managed to create the illusion for the teeming city folk that he spoke their language. But most of all, Roosevelt was to the Jews one of the major heroes of that great and good war. And when the war was over, not only was their fealty to the Democratic party now graven in stone, anything that smacked of the old order or of the forces of America First was simply unthinkable—out of the question—anathema—to them.

At war's end, something would begin to happen to the rest of America, too: something that would take more than a decade to manifest itself but that had probably been brewing—as Norman Mailer might say, in the American psychic underground—since the first heady days of victory. And that was the acquisition of a newfound sense of vast power and unending possibility. To be sure, the war against the Axis, followed almost immediately by the Cold War, had introduced a new recognition of evil, with its concomitant sense of human limitedness and imperfectibility, into American political-philosophical discourse. This new understanding was, of course, an inherently religious one, and was most prominently associated with the influence of Reinhold Niebuhr. (It ought to be remembered, however, that Sigmund Freud, too, had a hand in it, through the offices of some of the influential intellectuals who had subjected themselves to his much misunderstood and much distorted discipline.) But in the culture at large, such a view of the human condition could not stand for long against the almost overwhelming tide of wealth and innovation and freedom of movement and the sensation of moving toward . . . *sheer limitlessness.*

In my own life, this new sense of possibility was given its first expression by my leaving home and moving to New York City. I would not have thought of it—and would not to this day quite think of it—as leaving Christian America, but I was certainly getting away from what felt to me to be the prospect of a restricted and over-prescribed life. (In any case, as it would turn out, Christian America was itself coming to manifest signs of leaving home: Minneapolis, for example, quondam self-styled capital of the Bible Belt, was growing far more dedicated to art and theater than to preachments and country music, both of which had just about disappeared from local radio. Indeed, Minneapolis was plighting its troth to metropolitanism, with all the high pretension and low adventure that implied. And the same process would, though somewhat later and with considerably less success, also overtake my own home town, as it would, at least superficially, just about every American city of more than minimal size.)

As a Jew in the newly post-Holocaust period, and as someone who had come with adulthood to loathe the Soviet government and its apologists, I too for a time, that much-libeled time known as the fifties, professed to derive my ideas of the world from a deep commitment to the doctrine of human imperfectibility. But though I would never cease to harbor the altogether illiberal belief in the existence of unmitigated evil, something else, which continued as

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

always to lie in wait for American intellectuals, was also lying in wait for me.

Before I begin to describe what this something else was, it is important to understand that the postwar transition years—the years, say, from 1945 to 1965—were very good years for American Jews. For after the shock of discovering just how completely the entire civilized world had averted its gaze from what was happening to their fellow Jews in Europe, they would find not only that they were now being welcomed to hitherto restricted precincts but that all the traditional expressions of hostility to Jews had been banished from polite, and even largely from impolite, society. Beyond this, in some considerable degree as a result of the primary system, Jews began to exercise a new degree and new kind of political influence. And above all, Jews were now at ease culturally: not only were they being let in, but what they were being let into was more and more losing any definable character as Christian.

Now, what I have referred to before as the something, the force, just waiting to spring on the American Zeitgeist would in the early sixties be given throaty articulation by the courtiers surrounding John F. Kennedy, who, while clearly doing little more than making rhetorical gestures, nevertheless managed to hit the cultural nail squarely on the head. What I am talking about is summed up in the famous question of Robert Kennedy: "Why not?"

The question "Why not?" requires as its first premise great wealth and even greater expectations—conditions that for the American educated middle class came to be ever more taken for granted as the postwar years wore on. Beyond that, as we know, this question is and has ever been the introduction to sweet and irresistible seduction. "Why not?" turns out to be the means by which virtuous societies no less than virtuous ladies are led in pleasure down the path of self-destruction.

To be sure, many influences beyond sheer wealth led to the sense of being unshackled, prominent among them a number of literary and intellectual ideas and attitudes whose power over the country's culture was being vastly increased by the massive spread of higher education. In addition the country was beginning to experience a burst of just plain old political restlessness, the outgrowth of boredom—ever a possibility in the life of any democracy. Be these influences as they may, the sense of open-endedness came upon me and, I would say, a decisive number of my contemporaries with the force of a new revelation: life need no longer be constrained.

It was not so much that we actually lived our day-to-day lives according to this revelation; our households and our work proceeded pretty much as they would have had we still been living in the old society in which we had been brought up. We worked hard, for instance, and were for the most part and perforce reasonably prudent. We led fairly steady lives, and if there were certainly much more libertinism and many more divorces among us than there had been, say, in our parents' generation, they tended still to be very costly and painful and for the most part not light-mindedly undertaken.

When it came to politics, asking "Why not?" led us to disdain the old-style liberals, who for all their declared intention to make the country a more expansive place were in our view too smug of spirit and too banal of mind to be truly open to the new. Thus many of us declared ourselves to be radicals; but despite a few feeble efforts in the direction of play-acting at social transformation, our radicalism was to be found not in our lives, not even our political lives, but in our heads.

And in our heads was precisely the place where the radicalism of "Why not?" could, and did, do the maximum amount of damage, primarily to our own children. For if our 1930s nervous systems did not permit us, as they say, to "act out" the liberation of our minds, our children were to become its perfect foils. One of the things that to this day few people understand about the famous young of the 1960s is that far from rebelling, most of them were in fact being deeply obedient to the demands and expectations of their elders. That these demands and expectations were largely unspoken is little to the point. The sixties generation's inordinate self-regard; their demand to be given, without striving for it, all the goodies their society had to offer, including, of course, easy sex; their recourse to the instant and unearned sense of power and comfort supplied by drugs; their refusal to serve their country; their general ingratitude, expressed most of all in their declared intention to lead lives in no respect like those of their forebears—all these were translations of the hubris that, partly unconsciously but entirely influentially, constituted the basic underpinning of their upbringing.

And if "Why not?" proved in the end to be an invitation to sin against one's children—not to speak of an invitation to one's children to do some further considerable sinning against themselves—this question carried in its wake a second, even more lethal, one. That second question was, "So what?"—two words that in combination have the power to wither growing things on the vine. In our own time, for instance, this question is the intellectual shrug that lies behind the institution of multicultural education, the social shrug that lies behind a race-based double standard of conduct, and the moral shrug that lies behind the permission to teach techniques of anal and oral sex to schoolchildren.

In any case, these two questions—"Why not?" and "So what?"—would in the end prove to be among the most lasting legacies of our escape from the bounded, and limiting, view of life that had been our natural birthright, Jews and Christians, separately and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

together. Obviously, neither serious Judaism nor real Christianity can cohere with a sense of life that has banished all need for prayer, humility, and submission—three things that depend precisely on the recognition of human frailty and finitude. "Why not?" in its arrogance and "So what?" in its nihilism were thus to set the stage for a kind of nationwide drama of moral paralysis.

Many people who are shocked and repelled by the decadence that has so widely overtaken Western societies are now prepared to join the theorists who have traced our troubles all the way back to the Enlightenment. Theirs is a view of things that can be, and indeed has been, most persuasively argued, but it seems to me at once too convenient and too iniquitously ungrateful for either a Jew or a Christian to entertain. For Jews, certainly, the Enlightenment was the beginning of the hope, if not at all times and all places the reality, of liberty—a hope that it would be criminal for people like me to dare to make light of. And I would presume to say that the same is true for Christians: freedom of choice has after all been given to us by God, as have the mighty and humane benefits of science and technology. This is, let us remember, His universe, constituted as He has seen fit to constitute it and offering itself up to our scrutiny and management as He has chosen to offer it.

The same goes for the currently far too careless animadversions against humanism on the part of many conservatives. We are after all the heirs of giants who have lived on earth through the ages, many of whose ideas we may reject but whose genius and whose arts, be they of thought and language or of color and representation, both inspire and civilize us. Surely it was not meant for us to cut ourselves off from such an inheritance. So rather than calling on ancient and modern history—illuminating as they may be—to provide us with the source of our present threatening condition, let us just in all simplemindedness agree to recognize that our deepest troubles are of our very own making. They do not stem from enlightenment or from humanism; they are the troubles of our very own, very contemporary, self-generated atheism, the atheism, precisely, of "Why not?" and "So what?"

But to return to my story: there is no more efficient way to recover from the ungodly temptations of radicalism than to become conscious of the traps it has set for one's children. For if we, as I indicated before, still had moral and emotional capital to draw on from that other, that earlier, call it Judeo-Christian (a usage I am not crazy about) world, our children had only our reserves of "Why not" and "So what" to depend upon. I don't have to go into all the characteristics of the failure of that particular account; it can most aptly be summed up by the fact that in the late sixties and especially the early seventies there was a marked and sudden increase in the adolescent suicide rate. (That rate, by the way, persists, and may if anything have increased in recent years.)

In any case, there were basically two ways to respond to the admission, which became harder with each year to evade, that the young were in deep trouble. The first of these, the liberal way, was to assert that the sorrows of the young arose from the fact that the revolution had not yet been completed. Their demands for freedom and justice were still a long way from being met: there was as yet, for example, no justice for blacks or women or homosexuals; and as for freedom, regardless of how much of it was being wrested from courts and legislatures, no one had yet succeeded in putting an end to the continuing pressure from a group of the so-called "troglodytes," mainly small-town Christians, who, it was said, wished to return the country to the dark ages of censorship and intolerance. Not to mention the persistence of yet a different group of "troglodytes," in this case more sophisticated ones, who with their invention of the Cold War were constantly endangering the country and its young citizens with their longing to engage in jingoistic military exercises. No wonder, said the liberals, "the kids" were restless and unhappy. (I have referred to this reading of the young as liberal rather than radical because by the mid-seventies the former had in fact become entirely interchangeable with the latter.)

The second way was the way that came, not without considerable resistance, to surrender to the sobriquet neoconservative. Neoconservatives came with varying degrees of alacrity to see that it was the revolution itself and not the basically just and free country against which this putative revolution was being made that was responsible for the social ill-health of the young—responsible in one sense for the indisposition of the privileged among them and in another, far more permanently damaging, way for the ever more inescapable pathology of young blacks in the inner cities.

What we had here, then, was no mere difference of opinion, but rather a deep, and to this day ever deepening, schism. What had once been the liberal community was now split asunder; the metaphor of civil war would not be an entirely exaggerated one. In any case, the neoconservatives believed that justice and freedom as defined by the young and their middle-aged camp followers were at best caricatures and at worst outright perversions of those terms, properly understood.

Properly understood: there's the rub. From whence such proper understanding? Lenin once declared that he who says *a* must say *b*. Despite what happened to be the murderous nature of his own particular *a*, Lenin was of course right. The neoconservatives came to a new recognition of freedom (I do not, of course, mean to suggest that this recognition was in any sense theirs alone—God forbid—it's just

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that it happens to be their story I am telling here), and this view of the nature of freedom had, for the reasons I have cited and others, ceased to be the ersatz liberation of "Why not?" It had become rather the freedom meant by the term "free will"—which is to say, the taking of responsibility for what one does and what one is.

There you have the essential neoconservative *a*. And the *b*? The *b*—what else can it be?—is God. Beyond that, as the old Jewish saying has it, the rest is commentary. Rationalists find it interesting to debate whether or not God exists. Theologians seek to understand His attributes. But for Jews the real questions are not, or rather ought not to be, does He exist, and if so, who is He, but rather only, what is it that He wants of us? He has, to be sure, answered this question, not only in his Scripture but in the very constitution of our natures: to choose life, to be fruitful and multiply, and to walk in his ways, which means among other things to understand that life makes sense and that human fulfillment resides in resisting the ever-present temptation to return to *tohu vavohu*—the primordial chaos and void.

Such an understanding, of course, goes beyond politics and can never be satisfied by politics, but it does inevitably have a political dimension. It requires one to renounce the arrogant rejection of God's world that many liberals, particularly young ones, call by the name of idealism. What follows from this is one's commitment to a whole host of ideas and proposals which, despite the fact that they represent a major departure from what has been the dominant American ethos for more than half a century, are called conservative. (Alas, so far have things gone that many of the things that conservatives say they are out to conserve will in fact have to be rebuilt from scratch.)

The slowly dawning process of realization that brought the neoconservatives from *a* to *b*—the discovery or in some cases perhaps rediscovery of God—was for most of us more like a long climb up a steep hill than like a flash of lightening. And among other things it was to bring us into a new and largely unfamiliar community of conservative fellows. It would be hard to say who was more surprised, nonplussed, and possibly to some extent also amused by this new association, the old conservatives or their new neoconservative allies.

Now, most of the journalists who have assigned themselves the task of trying to describe or explain—or simply give vent to their hostility toward—this new development called neoconservatism have identified it as being primarily a Jewish phenomenon. This is most certainly not the case; many neoconservatives are Christian. Nevertheless, this misapprehension does make a certain perverse sense. For Christians in America, however far and for however long they may have strayed, the journey from liberal culture to conservatism is essentially a journey back home, where, so to speak, there are a multitude of loving arms to enfold them. For the Jews involved in this phenomenon, the case is rather different: conservatism for them represents an estrangement from not one but from two of their former communities, from the Jewish community as well as from that of the liberal intellectuals.

Thus they have found themselves in a kind of no-man's-land where they have been engaged in constructing for themselves a cultural home for which there has been neither precedent nor blueprint. In an alliance with Christian conservatives against the atheism that has made a sick and paltry joke of each of their respective and joint traditions and that has begun like a swarm of termites to eat away the underpinnings of this democratic republic, the new Jewish conservatives have come to understand that any alienation they felt as children in Christian America is as nothing compared with the danger they sense to themselves and their progeny, along with their uncomprehending coreligionists, in atheist America. Even less than others, they know, can America's Jews afford to indulge themselves and others in the reckless endangerment represented by the various movements that have swept unresisted through liberal society: prominent among them, the movement for a woman's right not to be a woman; the movement for homosexuals to be considered merely heterosexuals with a somewhat different erotic taste; the movement to dehumanize blacks by exempting them from ordinary moral demands.

*School prayer? This* is what organized Jewry finds threatening? As it happens, I am no devotee of school prayer, on the ground that it is a distraction, a kind of trivializing surrogacy for truly weighty issues this society must find the courage to face and deal with. Nevertheless, there is something unholy in the Jewish argument that the reintroduction of the acknowledgment of God into the schools will in some way be discriminatory of and psychologically harmful to their children when these schools as they are represent so many *real* dangers to them: the danger of the coarsening of their sensibilities, for one, and of the snuffing out of their normal youthful longing to grow up, as well as the danger of leaving them utterly cynical about their society and their country and the rightful demands on them of both. Prayer, indeed; it is Jewish liberals, more than children, who should be doing the praying.

There are other unholinesses as well. One need not spell out each and every aspect of the participation of the organized Jewish community in the liberal culture. It is enough to say that that participation involves a kind of heedless assurance of being in the right that sits particularly ill on people whose very existence depends on a mere stroke of luck—the luck of someone's having immigrated to the United States. Such people ought to be the first rather than

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the last to be found each day on their knees in gratitude to God. And such people ought to be the first rather than the last to understand the anxieties of the devout Christians—evangelicals, fundamentalists, orthodox Catholics and Protestants—about, precisely, the growing chaos in a country from whose public life religion has not so much disappeared but been banished. Thus have the neoconservative Jews sought—so far, to put it mildly, with mixed success—to convince their mainstream fellow Jews that the growing political strength of Christian believers is not a danger to them, that, on the contrary, in the long run it will conduce far more to the security and well-being of their children and grandchildren.

And yet, and yet . . . While the new Jewish conservatives may quarrel with their fellow Jews about conservatism and Christianity, there are occasions, too, when they wish they could make their Christian fellow-conservatives a little slower to temper against Jewish liberal stiffneckedness. It is true that the mainstream American Jewish community has egregiously, and I believe suicidally, conflated liberal atheism—radical feminism, gay rights, promiscuous abortion—with the Jewish interest. And it is true that the mainstream Jewish community, priding itself on its concern for social justice, has on the whole been almost professionally insensitive to the many valid complaints of social *in*justice on the part of believing Christians, particularly the evangelical fundamentalists. But now and then those of us who wish to turn our fellow Jews from the path of liberal suicide come up against a certain crackpottedness—and sometimes worse—from the right that appears to be reminiscent of that old 1930s Bible Belt, Coughlinite, America First damnation of the Jews. And when that happens, it is not ideas we are left to deal with but nervous systems.

The late Lucy Dawidowicz, distinguished historian of the Holocaust, declared that there should be a moratorium on the very use of the word "Holocaust"—that it has become a crutch and an excuse and a cheapener of memory—and what she said is undeniably right and healthy. Moreover, if the twentieth century witnessed a horror beyond all the horrors of Jewish history, it also witnessed a new redemption, the return to our ancient land. Still, we remain testy about our security, in the United States as well as in the ever-threatened Israel—testy in a way that others perhaps do not understand.

The "Why not?" and "So what?" of present-day liberalism are thus a special temptation to Jews, who entertain themselves with the idea that they can escape what has for so long been God's seemingly difficult, and for them often particularly cruel, decree. And if anything, these questions are proving more dangerous to Jews than to anyone else, undermining as they do the foundations of the kind of free society on which the twentieth century has taught them that they must depend for their very continuation. As between the old Christian America, which did, it cannot be denied, visit the Jews with certain discomforts, and the new atheist America, which goes straight for the jugular of their children and their children's children, how can America's Jews feel there is even any choice? And yet, of course, they do most unsentiently continue to feel exactly that.

Still, there are many Christians, too, who suffer from that age-old Hebraic malady that the Lord once diagnosed as stiffness of the neck and who, I like to think, cause Him a certain worry, as they do me.

Let me explain. Last year I sat one evening in late spring on a veranda in Jerusalem, looking across at Mount Zion, from whose wonderfully lighted nightscape loomed the dome of the Dormition church. It was a beautiful evening, balmy, heavy with the scent of jasmine. And as I sat there I thought: Why do not the world's Christians celebrate the return of the Jews to this city? They have tended it so lovingly, burnished its ancient beauty, planted it with flowers and trees, made it so pleasant and been so tender and so mindful of its holiness. For nineteen years the eastern half of Jerusalem, including the much hallowed Old City, languished under the Jordanians, who not only desecrated Jewish holy places and graveyards but left the whole area in a dirty and threadbare condition. Why, then, do the Christians not celebrate the salvation of Jerusalem made possible by the Israeli military victory in 1967? Why do Christian institutions take part in pressuring the Israelis to place themselves once again in mortal danger and throw the history- and faith-laden parts of the city back into wretchedness? The answer is that the evangelicals do indeed celebrate, both the return of the Jews to the holy land and their rescue of old Jerusalem. But others, many, many others, do not—for reasons that, no matter how often they are articulated, simply make no sense to me.

In any case, as I sat there that evening, I understood with my senses instead of merely with my head how truly dependent on one another Jews and Christians nowadays really are—in a world in which they are both so dangerously surrounded by barbarians, Christian and Jewish barbarians among them. The little girl from St. Paul has come a long way and so, I keep hoping and believing, have at least some of the boys from Nativity. FT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# The Gospel of Life
# A Symposium

## Avery Dulles

In general terms, *Evangelium Vitae* (The Gospel of Life), which was issued by John Paul II last March, is an analysis of the "culture of death" and an exhortation to promote the "culture of life." The obligatory force of a pastoral analysis and exhortation of this type is difficult to pin down. Reflections on the "signs of the times" do not have the same kind of authority as specific doctrines that are traced to the apostolic Deposit of Faith. The Pope is exercising personal insight from a Christian perspective and proposing a pastoral plan of action. The authority of his statements consists above all in their persuasiveness to the audience he is addressing—not merely Catholics, but all persons of good will.

By and large, the reception has been positive. Many commentators recognize the threats posed by moral relativism, hedonism, and the like. Some, however, think that the Pope's account of contemporary culture is too unrelievedly negative. This difference of opinion is a matter of judgment; it cannot, I think, be settled by arguments from authority.

The properly doctrinal part of *EV* comes in the third chapter, and especially in the three italicized statements within that chapter, in which the Pope condemns the taking of innocent human life, abortion, and euthanasia. In these italicized condemnations the language is very strong, approaching that of infallible definitions. After claiming the authority of natural law, Scripture, tradition, the previous teaching of the magisterium, and the unanimous agreement of the bishops today, the Pope appeals to his own authority as successor of Peter and issues a solemn declaration. The consultation of bishops preceding this encyclical reminds one of the consultations undertaken by Pius IX and Pius XII before the definition of the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption.

According to Cardinal Ratzinger and others, earlier drafts of the encyclical did contain infallible definitions, but the language of dogmatic definition and infallibility was dropped in the final text. Ratzinger says that it was considered unnecessary to define dogmatically what was already so clear from Christian faith and tradition. Another motive for avoiding an ex cathedra definition may have been the ongoing debate about whether papal infallibility extends to specific principles of natural law unless they are clearly taught in revelation itself. On abortion and euthanasia the testimony of Scripture and early tradition is relatively weak. It may also be said that the Church's position with regard to these practices is still evolving as new scientific knowledge and technology become available.

Whatever the reason for the amendment, it seems clear that *EV* does not define any irreformable dogmas. On the other hand, the Pope evidently judges that the positions he takes on the three crucial points are irreversible. I expect that Catholic theologians who wish to be considered loyal to the Church will seek to show that their teaching is in line with the italicized statements.

The first statement, which has to do with the taking of innocent human life, is the least controversial of the three. I do not know any moral theologian who denies the Pope's teaching, although it might be possible to imagine some moral dilemmas; for example, if one were ordered to kill an innocent hostage as the price of saving an entire city from destruction. Beginning with the murder of Cain, the Bible repeatedly condemns the shedding of innocent human blood. A few difficult texts can be proposed—for example, the passages describing the ban practiced in the time of the Judges and Samuel—but such practices do not violate the general principle, since populations placed under the ban were not regarded as innocent.

In connection with the slaughter of the innocent, the Pope mentions that killing in self-defense or in defense of others is quite another matter, since the aggressor is at fault. Here the Pope speaks in line with a long Catholic tradition and will not be opposed except by a few absolute pacifists.

Another connected statement has to do with capi-



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tal punishment. The Pope says that society has a right to defend itself against criminals, but that in our time such self-defense hardly ever justifies executions. Here the Pope seems to be opposing a long tradition, based on Scripture, which has defended capital punishment for its value as retribution for the evil done and as a deterrence against future crime. Cardinal Ratzinger in his press conference said that the Catholic doctrine on this point is undergoing development. I doubt that the Pope's rather summary treatment settles the matter of capital punishment definitively. [See Cardinal Ratzinger's clarification in The Public Square—Eds.]

The second pronouncement, on abortion, enjoys little if any direct support from Scripture, but is confirmed by early Church tradition and by the constant teaching of the magisterium, at least in our century. While all Catholic moral theologians seem opposed to the direct killing of human persons, some maintain that the embryo in the early stages is not yet a full human person, and therefore does not have the same rights as, for instance, the mother.

The question is particularly difficult at the stage between conception and implantation, when the zygote is still capable of dividing into two or more parts, each of which can become a person. Some Catholic bioethicists argue that this divisibility is proof that a single human person does not yet exist. On this ground they would allow the expulsion of the fertilized ovum shortly after rape or incest. This opinion is not compatible with the Pope's teaching, especially in view of his citation from the document of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Donum Vitae* (1974), but there may still be some room for further discussion on technical issues of this type.

In connection with abortion, the Pope condemns in vitro fertilization, partly because it produces "excess" embryos which are then used for medical research or simply discarded. He likewise rejects the use of "defective" fetuses or anencephalic babies for organ transplants, practices which he regards as barbaric and "absolutely unacceptable."

The third proposition, dealing with euthanasia, raises similar issues. The Pope clearly and absolutely condemns the direct killing of the aged and infirm, whether with or without their consent. He explicitly rules out assisted suicide. On the other hand, he does allow for the discontinuation of medication and life support when such measures achieve no proportionate benefit. He even allows the use of pain relievers that may somewhat shorten human life, provided that they are used to alleviate pain and not to shorten life. On these points the Pope's position is moderate, and may disappoint some moral rigorists.

Toward the end of the third chapter, the Pope takes up the relationship between the moral and juridical orders. He insists that the civil law should protect the right to life, and that laws that deny such protection, even when passed by majority votes, are invalid. Since it is always morally wrong to destroy innocent human life, persons who are ordered to do so by doctors or state officials have a duty to object in conscience and to refuse compliance. In ruling out formal cooperation and placing limits on material cooperation, the Pope is following traditional casuistry. His teaching, however, could raise problems for some Catholic politicians and judges, since their election or appointment might depend on their willingness to support permissive practices, especially regarding abortion. The Pope does not allow them to separate the realm of private conscience from that of public conduct. His only concession is that elected officials may support proposals aimed at reducing abortions when it is not possible to ban them entirely.

In chapter four the Pope calls upon bishops to make sure that the doctrine of *EV* is handed on in its integrity, making sure that it is accepted in theological faculties, seminaries, and Catholic institutions, in which "sound doctrine is taught, explained, and more fully investigated." This fuller investigation would seem to permit serious discussion of some of the more technical and detailed teachings of the encyclical, though of course the Pope would discountenance public protests and efforts to erect a "parallel magisterium" of theologians. My expectation is that few teachers of moral theology will deny the main points of the encyclical, including the three italicized propositions, but that cautious speculation regarding the beginning, development, and end of life will continue, even in Catholic institutions.

Avery Dulles, S.J., *is author, most recently, of* The Assurance of Things Hoped For: A Theology of Christian Faith *(Oxford University Press).*

---

## Russell Hittinger

If in 1864 one had surveyed the prospect of harmonious relations between Rome and the new secular governments of the West, the situation would not have seemed promising. In that year Pius IX issued the infamous *Syllabus of Errors*, listing some eighty erroneous propositions. More than fifty concerned matters of civil governance. The concluding canon condemned the belief that "the Roman Pontiff can, and ought to, reconcile himself, and come to terms with progress, liberalism, and modern civilization."

Measured against that era, the years 1945 to 1989 witnessed remarkable cooperation between Rome and the secular democracies. Reflecting in *Centesimus Annus* (1991) on the past century of papal social teachings, Pope John Paul II notes that some truths about the political order are learned *experientia historica*, "by historical experience." The Second World War and its immediate aftermath gave the Church much to consider. Rome's interpretation of that ex-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

perience led it to make common cause with the secular democracies against the totalitarian governments of Eastern Europe and Asia. But it also led to a common ideological commitment to the virtues of constitutional democracy and to inalienable human rights. These ideals represent more than a merely rhetorical adjustment to political modernity. They were enshrined in the decrees of Vatican II and the Code of Canon Law.

This relationship now seems to be entering a new and very troubled phase. At the International Conference on Population and Development at Cairo last year, the Vatican challenged the developed countries on abortion. Less than a year later, the encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* refers ominously to a "conspiracy" against human rights. The Pope speaks of the "disintegration" of governments that permit abortion and euthanasia, characterizing them as "tyrant states" which poison the "culture of rights." Quoting Pius XII's Radio Message of Pentecost 1941, the Pope insists that "any government which refused to recognize human rights or acted in violation of them would not only fail in its duty; its decrees would be wholly lacking in binding force." Although *EV* names no particular governments or states, no one can doubt that these criticisms are directed toward the constitutional democracies of the West.

How did it come to pass that papal admonitions against Nazis are now being cited against the constitutional democracies? We can here give only a superficial outline of the history that constitutes at least part of the answer to this question. From 1789 until well into this century, the popes viewed the secular, constitutional democracies as interlopers in the house of Christendom. Even for Leo XIII, who is rightly credited with trying to understand modern social and political problems on their own terms, the Holy Roman Empire was still the paradigmatic polity: the prince limited from above by God and the Church and from below by the customs and traditions of private law.

The popes of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries thus saw two problems with the secular democracies. On the one hand, they worried that the secular democracies lacked limits. These new governments did not recognize, from above as it were, the authority of God or the Church; nor did they adequately restrain, from below, the will of the people. (The popes were still very much influenced by the French Revolution.) The new secular state appeared to be a limitless organ of power. Hence, encyclicals like *Diuturnum* (1881), *Immortale Dei* (1885), and *Quas Primas* (1925) emphasized the need of states to recognize limits from above. On the other hand, the secular democracies were also criticized for the quite different problem of relinquishing to mere private parties and interests the powers proper to the state. In this respect, "liberalism" meant a system of unrestrained laissez-faire, where the political state refused to protect the poor and the weak. Encyclicals like *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931) make the point that when the state relinquishes power to protect the poor and the weak, it fails to be a state in the proper sense of the term. Although *Quadragesimo* is often cited for the principle of subsidiarity, we should not forget that Pius XI's main argument is that the state must "watch over the community and its parts."

Like anyone else, the Vatican learns by experience. After World War II, Jacques Maritain contended in *Man and the State* (1951) that the modern, democratic experiment got two things right, in principle, at least, if not always in practice: (i) the principle of constitutionalism, which prevents the juridical state from being equated with the common good; and (ii) the principle of inalienable rights, which sets certain moral limits on how the state can conduct its business. Maritain, of course, was not the only Catholic who urged this line of analysis, but his work was especially influential. The first two sentences of *Dignitatis Humanae* (1965) paraphrase Maritain on the need for constitutionally limited government and the recognition of inalienable rights—in this case, the right of religious conscience.

The encyclical *Pacem in Terris* (1963) and the conciliar decree *Gaudium et Spes* (1965) no longer judge the constitutional democracies according to the specific cultural and political pattern of Christendom, but rather in the light of their own principles of limited government and recognition of human rights. A remarkable period of cooperation between the Vatican and the secular democracies followed. This occurred in no small part because Rome stopped lecturing these democracies as though they were the prodigal children of Christendom. If this period can be measured by encyclicals, the high water mark is certainly *Centesimus Annus* (1991)—an encyclical that celebrated the demise of the totalitarian regimes of the East and enthusiastically recommends the ideal of constitutionally limited government, recognition of inalienable rights, and the civic virtues of the free society. The Pope went so far as to cite the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man.

*EV*, however, has a different tone; in it one senses the Pope's anguish when he writes: "A long historical process is reaching a turning-point. The process which once led to discovering the idea of 'human rights'—rights inherent in every person and prior to any Constitution and State legislation—is today marked by a surprising contradiction. Precisely in an age when the inviolable rights of the person are solemnly proclaimed and the value of life is publicly affirmed, the very right to life is being denied or trampled upon, especially at the more significant moments of existence: the moment of birth and the moment of death." "Paradoxically," John Paul continues, what were once crimes now "assume the nature of 'rights,' to the point that the State is called

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

upon to give them legal recognition." It is "sinister," he says, that states are "departing from the basic principles of their Constitutions." For, by recognizing as moral rights the right to kill the weak and infirm, the "entire culture of human rights" is threatened. "It is a threat capable, in the end, of jeopardizing the very meaning of democratic coexistence."

As these remarks suggest, the evaluation of the constitutional democracies has come full circle. Recall the two problems that initially made Rome cautious about these new regimes: that without recognizing the authority of divine moral law, or the authority of custom and tradition, the power of the state was without limit; and that the just interests of the weak could be abandoned to the caprice of private parties. Today, this is precisely the criticism asserted in *EV* on the issue of abortion and euthanasia. The states, contrary to "the basic principle of their Constitutions," recognize no limit to how they can effectuate social and economic policies. By transforming what were once crimes into individual rights, the states permit private parties to determine the status and merit of the weak, and even to effectuate that judgment by way of lethal force. The Pope observes that "this is the exact opposite of what a State ruled by law, as a community in which the 'reasons of force' are replaced by the 'force of reason,' historically intended to affirm." Moreover, at the international level, vague and ideologically infused declarations on rights, combined with indirect threats concerning humanitarian aid, easily provide a pretext for nongovernmental organizations to cross jurisdictional boundaries and, in effect, determine social and economic policies without any ordinary legal or political accountability.

The causes of this "surprising contradiction" are complicated. One of the causes, however, demands immediate and ongoing attention. For three decades, the Vatican proceeded as though the language of human or natural rights was unproblematical. Maritain taught an entire generation of prelates and theologians that there could be a practical agreement about human rights even in the absence of a common philosophical framework—not to mention the absence of stable systems of positive law. Perhaps this idea was plausible after the trauma of World War II. In times of crisis, there is often an abundance of good will and common aspiration.

But the Cairo Conference showed the unreliability, and indeed the corruptibility, of talk about human rights. Morally fraudulent rights claims have not only damaged the constitutional orders of the Western states; they also pose a nearly insurmountable barrier to the emergence of stable constitutional regimes in the developing world. Alleged "rights" to kill the unborn and the infirm are not likely to facilitate constitutional order in countries where violence and arbitrary uses of power are the political coin of the realm. Even where the political and philosophical language is not morally corrupted, it is very difficult to integrate the abstract concept of human rights with the concrete requirements of constitutional order and the rule of law. Articles Twelve and Thirteen of the recent UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, for example, demand "the child's right to express an opinion in matters affecting the child and to have that opinion heard," and "the right to seek, receive, and impart information through any media." Having listed some forty rights of this sort, the Convention then approves the power of the state "to translate the rights in this Convention into actuality." The Vatican approved this statement even though these "rights" are not unrelated to the problem addressed at Cairo and in *EV*. Rather than directing and limiting the state with respect to the needs of the weak, such "rights" can have the opposite effect: in this case, dissolving parental authority and rendering children vulnerable to precisely the kind of social policies the Vatican fought at Cairo.

The two recent encyclicals, *Veritatis Splendor* and *Evangelium Vitae*, indicate a more cautious approach to the issue of rights. While not retreating from the belief that there exist fundamental moral rights, the Pope clearly recognizes the problem of counterfeit versions—and perhaps even the problem of authentic rights stated too generally. One hopes that Vatican policies will catch up to the encyclicals. Having taken two centuries to set aside the older model of political Christendom, and having only recently passed through a kind of honeymoon with the secular constitutional democracies, Rome is now prepared to take a more realistic measure of the situation.

Russell Hittinger *teaches in the School of Philosophy at the Catholic University of America.*

---

## Richard M. Doerflinger

Besides condemning abortion and euthanasia as attacks on human life, *Evangelium Vitae* addresses other hotly debated issues in medical ethics that implicate the value and dignity of human life.

The timeliness of this encyclical is apparent when I recall the issues I have been asked to address recently as a staff member at the U.S. Bishops' Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities. In May the American Medical Association published a proposal by its own Ethical and Judicial Affairs Council that physicians should be able to transplant vital organs from anencephalic infants before they are dead. In August the House of Representatives approved an appropriations bill that would forbid federal funding of experiments on human embryos outside the womb. Congress was also beginning to debate whether to require pregnant women to undergo prenatal testing for HIV.

The reponse of *EV* to such issues is no superficial

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rejection or distrust of modern medicine or technology, but it is a challenge to the way such technology is being used.

Regarding transplants, John Paul II says donating organs is a "particularly praiseworthy" gesture when "performed in an ethically acceptable manner, with a view to offering a chance of health and even of life itself to the sick who sometimes have no other hope." Such donation is a striking illustration of a central theme of the encyclical: that we truly come to fulfillment as persons by making "a sincere gift of self."

Yet, when condemning the killing of sick and disabled people, the Holy Father also denounces "other more furtive, but no less serious and real, forms of euthanasia." One example of these occurs "when, in order to increase the availability of organs for transplants, organs are removed without respecting objective and adequate criteria which verify the death of the donor." Thus, in the view of the encyclical, the AMA plan to harvest organs from anencephalic infants is in direct conflict with the organization's claim to be against euthanasia. A deliberately lethal transplant operation *is* euthanasia.

On embryo research we see a similar distinction between use and misuse of medical advances. Experimental procedures can be licit if they "respect the life and integrity of the embryo and do not involve disproportionate risks for it, but rather are directed to its healing, the improvement of its condition of health, or its individual survival"; but the mere "use of human embryos or fetuses as an object of experimentation" is "a crime against their dignity as human beings."

Finally, methods of prenatal diagnosis have to be judged not only by their own risks to the subject but also by the intended use of the information obtained. Is it sought "to make possible early therapy or even to favor a serene and informed acceptance of the child not yet born"? Or is it being used with "a eugenic intention which accepts selective abortion in order to prevent the birth of children affected by various types of anomalies"?

Confronted with modern techniques for analyzing and changing human beings, the Holy Father asks: When we use this technique in this way, are we on our way to or from human dignity? Are we doing something *for* a person, or are we doing something *to* that person to treat him or her as a mere means for the good of others?

It is easy to understand one theme present here. Technology in and of itself is morally neutral; it can be put to good or bad uses. But John Paul II's analysis runs deeper. His comments on the dangers of modern technology go beyond past statements about the need for technical advance to be matched by moral maturity. He knows that technical progress has made possible "new forms of attacks on the dignity of the human being," and he even speaks of a new "Promethean attitude" that has helped make possible "a war of the powerful against the weak."

Modern technology (or a misplaced reliance on technology) has fed this war against the weak in two ways that, at first, may seem contradictory.

Technological progress has invited us to imagine that human knowledge can solve any problem and control any situation. It has tempted us to think of ourselves as gods. At the same time, the technological view of the world is increasingly applied to man himself in his physical reality. The body is reduced to "pure materiality," to "simply a complex of organs, functions, and energies to be used according to the sole criteria of pleasure and efficiency." The human person is divided against itself, as the body is increasingly relegated to a mere instrument for the fulfillment of human wishes and desires. The person is freed from all restraints on personal freedom, and at the same time reduced to an object.

This "ghost in the machine" view of the person has distorted many people's views of themselves with respect to sexuality and reproduction. But this encyclical is especially concerned with what such dualism does to relations between one person and another. For if only mind and will truly count, and the body is a mere object, then those who have strong intellects and wills can have no compunction about manipulating and even killing less intelligent or less "productive" humans for the greater good.

Anyone who doubts the existence of such attitudes in the U.S. should have attended the recent deliberations of the National Institutes of Health regarding experiments on human embryos. The NIH Human Embryo Research Panel's chief ethicist, Professor Ronald Green, proposed that the intelligent and articulate members of a society should vote on whether other members of the species deserve the status of "personhood." This judgment should be based on enlightened self-interest: Would a vote to grant personhood benefit the rest of us, or harm us (for example, by preventing us from doing lethal experiments on this human that could add to our medical knowledge)? Amazingly, though Green's ethical system is clearly intended for application to humans after as well as before birth, it was accepted by the nineteen members of the NIH panel without a dissenting voice.

This destructive trend, in which the elite of a society judge whether its weaker members have lives worthy to be lived, is not entirely new. The Holy Father alludes to "those crimes against humanity of which our century has had such sad experience"—and he points out that the crimes would be no less horrific if approved by popular consensus.

Two generations ago, as England and the U.S. were congratulating themselves on their victory over the Nazis, C. S. Lewis warned his countrymen not to fall into attitudes that would create a purely instrumental view of human life. It is one thing to talk

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

about man mastering nature, he said—but when we turn our technologies back upon fellow human beings, we will not advance knowledge and power for some people without denigrating and exploiting other people. Ultimately the class of "used" people might become very large indeed—encompassing almost everyone who is not part of an increasingly amoral technical elite.

When Lewis spoke in this context of "the abolition of man," many undoubtedly saw this as poetic exaggeration. The Holy Father sees it as a real possibility—and he thinks the beginning of the third millennium might be a good time for society to decide whether that is the road it wants to travel. The alternative path is one that he only sketches—a world in which medical research studies people without manipulating them, in which bodily life is respected as inherently good, and every person has an equal claim on the right to live. Filling in the consequences of this vision for the way we do medicine and medical research is a task for all of us.

Richard M. Doerflinger *is Associate Director for Policy Development at the Secretariate for Pro-Life Activities, National Conference of Catholic Bishops.*

---

## Robert P. George

In the *Summa Theologica* St. Thomas Aquinas famously teaches that "human laws do not forbid all vices, from which the virtuous abstain, but only the more grievous vices, from which it is possible for the majority to abstain, and chiefly those that are injurious to others, without the prohibition of which human society could not be maintained."

Human law need not, and according to St. Thomas should not, enforce every obligation of the natural or moral law. In certain cases it is better for the civil and criminal law of a community to permit immoral acts, lest the legal prohibition of those acts bring about worse consequences for society than a policy of legal toleration.

For example, certain Catholics have legitimately appealed to this teaching in support of the "decriminalizing" of marijuana and other drugs. Their argument (though I myself remain unpersuaded by it) is that the unintended bad consequences of drug prohibition—higher rates of street crime, more police corruption, the diversion of law enforcement and other resources from more urgent matters—are worse for society as a whole than any increases in drug abuse that might result in the event of decriminalization.

People who appeal to the teaching of Aquinas in making this argument typically do not deny that "recreational" drug use is immoral; nor do they suggest that people who wish to use drugs have "a moral right to do moral wrong." Their claim, rather, is that drug prohibition should be abandoned because it is an unreasonably costly, probably futile, and possibly even counterproductive policy. Their challenge to prevailing drug policy is not, strictly speaking, a moral one. To properly assess its soundness is to make a prudential judgment based on an accurate understanding of the costs and consequences of drug prohibition as opposed to legalization.

Is it equally legitimate for Catholic apologists for legal abortion, and even its facilitation by public funding, to appeal to Aquinas' teaching about the toleration of evil, as Mario Cuomo, for example, has done?

In *Evangelium Vitae*, the Pope declares that any such appeal is illegitimate. Explicitly citing the passage from the *Summa* that I have quoted, the Pope affirms the proposition that "public authority can sometimes choose not to put a stop to something which—were it prohibited—would cause more serious harm." He immediately goes on to say, however, that law may never "legitimize as a right of individuals . . . an offense against other persons caused by the disregard of so fundamental a right as the right to life."

The first and most urgent obligation of law and government is to protect the fundamental rights of every human being within their jurisdiction. The first and most fundamental human right is the right to life, or, to be more precise, the right of an innocent person not to be deliberately killed, whether by public authority or private license. Although this understanding of the most basic purposes of law and government has been constantly affirmed in the tradition of papal social teaching, it is by no means peculiar to Catholicism. Indeed, as Mother Teresa recently reminded us in her plea to the Supreme Court to reverse *Roe v. Wade*, this understanding is at the core of the American political tradition as expressed by our nation's founders in the Declaration of Independence.

The grave injustice to the unborn of laws permitting and funding abortion makes it illegitimate for citizens or public officials to support such laws. They can never be justified, as, say, drug legalization could, conceivably, be justified, as a "lesser evil" that one may reluctantly support as a matter of prudence. The prudential toleration of evil simply has no application in cases of radical *injustice*. So, as the Pope says, "in the case of intrinsically unjust law, such as a law permitting abortion or euthanasia, it is never licit to obey it or to take part in a propaganda campaign in favor of such a law, or vote for it."

A problem that has vexed Catholics and others in the pro-life movement, however, is the question whether it is legitimate to support a less than perfectly protective legislative proposal restricting abortion, euthanasia, and like injustices, when the only politically realistic alternative at the moment is a proposal that is even less protective of the rights of the unborn, elderly, or handicapped. Can one legitimately judge, as a matter of prudence, that the imper-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fect, though more protective, proposal is a "lesser evil"?

Here the Pope says yes: "When it is not possible to overturn or completely abrogate a pro-abortion law, an elected official, whose absolute personal opposition to procured abortion was well known, could licitly support proposals aimed at limiting the harm done by such a law and at lessening its negative consequences at the level of general opinion and public morality." So, though the Pope offers no comfort to "pro-choice" Catholics such as Governor Cuomo or Senator Ted Kennedy, he in effect blesses the efforts of Governor Bob Casey and Congressman Henry Hyde to work incrementally toward the full equal protection of the unborn.

The Pope does not provide an extensive argument in behalf of his teaching about the permissibility of sometimes supporting imperfectly just laws. If I may presume, however, to speculate about the ground of his teaching, I would suggest that the key to the matter is the application of the Golden Rule of fairness to the question of supporting such laws.

While it can never be fair to will that members of a disfavored class—whether the unborn, the disabled, or members of some racial or religious minority group—be excluded from legal protections one wills for oneself and those dear to one, a legislator or voter is personally responsible for no unfairness to the victims of an objectively unjust law where he supports that law precisely, and only, because the alternative is even less protective of its victims. Here, as Bishop John J. Myers of Peoria observed in his Pastoral Statement on the Obligations of Catholics and Rights of Unborn Children, the voter or legislator need will only the law's protections, while accepting, though not willing, the injustices that he is powerless to remove. A legislator or voter is justified in supporting a law whose protections fall short of all that justice requires where the unjust aspects of the law do not figure in his deliberation and choice as reasons for his decision to vote for it. Rather, they figure as reasons to oppose it—albeit reasons that are defeated in these circumstances by the protections it affords to victims who would otherwise be left even more vulnerable.

Of course, as the Pope makes plain, one can never rest content with such a law. One may not support it unconditionally. One must resolve, and, as the Pope says, *publicly make manifest one's resolve*, to continue working for the full equal protection of the unborn and other victims of legal injustice.

ROBERT P. GEORGE *is Professor of Politics at Princeton University and author of* Making Men Moral: Civil Liberties and Public Morality *(Oxford University Press).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

*Review Essay*

# Villages and Virtues

*Mary Ann Glendon*

THE VILLAGERS: CHANGED VALUES, ALTERED LIVES, THE CLOSING OF THE URBAN-RURAL GAP. By RICHARD CRITCHFIELD. *Anchor. 497 pp. $27.50.*

IN GOOD HANDS: THE LIFE OF A FAMILY FARM. By CHARLES FISH. *Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 229 pp. $21.*

Sitting in the British Museum, amidst a great, grimy, bustling city, Karl Marx wrote that the bourgeoisie should be thanked for at least one accomplishment: rescuing a large part of the European population from "the idiocy of rural life." Over a century later, it's still open season for intellectuals on villagers and their values. In American universities, on the rare occasions when small towns are discussed at all, they are typically portrayed as hotbeds of intolerance, hypocrisy, and oppression.

Not even the New England town meeting can count on the benefit of the doubt. In a lecture on the tension between judicial review and democratic decision making, Archibald Cox once innocently remarked that he would be vexed if the Supreme Court were to overturn an ordinance adopted in the open meeting of his town. That smacked of heresy to Cox's colleague Laurence Tribe, who warned that to praise the town meeting form of government "ignores the danger of small-town oppression." Casual identification of small towns with oppression is not confined to the leftward range of the political spectrum. Charles Fried, Solicitor-General under President Reagan, wrote in 1990, "What moves me is my attachment to human liberty, liberty of spirit, liberty from the crowd, and even from . . . the community (or, less charitably, the petty impositions of village tyrants)."

Caricatures of community life by the knowledge-class, of course, bear no closer relation to reality than do rosy-hued pastoral scenes. But such negative stereotypes play into the hands of those eager to entrust fundamental questions of how we should order our lives together to judges rather than to local self-determination and ordinary politics. The waters of opportunism have closed over the efforts of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s to open political processes to broader participation through education and voting. The rights revolution that took rise in the seventies came not to strengthen politics, but to bury—or at least to bypass—it. Would-be oligarchs of the right and left seize any pretext to delegitimate the democratic elements in our republican experiment. In their book the failures of local government in the segregated South are an excuse for ignoring the Ninth and Tenth Amendments to the Constitution.

Excellent antidotes to sentimental, as well as disparaging, views of village life are two recent thick descriptions by Richard Critchfield and Charles Fish. Critchfield's portraits of eight peasant villages and Fish's story of a family farm in Vermont also prompt reflection on whether stable regimes of individual rights, complex economies, and modern welfare states can be sustained without the habits of cooperation and self-restraint that are nurtured in the world's eroding communities of memory and mutual aid.

Critchfield, a journalist who died suddenly in December 1994 shortly after the publication of *The Villagers*, began to study and write about villages in the late 1960s, using the participant-observer method favored by many anthropologists. A village, as he defines it, is a settlement ranging from a few households to a few thousand inhabitants who subsist by farming or fishing. For over a quarter century, he lived for periods ranging from three months to more than a year in rural communities in many parts of the world, including India, Korea, Java, Kenya, Egypt, Mexico, and Poland. His early reports on these sojourns won him one of the first MacArthur "genius" awards. His legacy is a remarkable collection of stories and essays where the sights, sounds, and rhythms of daily life are vividly portrayed through the eyes of the men and women the author came to know over the years.

The importance of Critchfield's work is heightened by the fact that village life underwent a momentous historic transformation during the years he was visiting and revisiting his village friends. As late as the 1970s, about two-thirds of the world's population still lived in villages where modes of life and work had changed little since agriculture was invented. By the year 2000, for the first time in human history, a majority of the earth's inhabitants will be living in urban areas. The significance of that shift, according to historian William H. McNeill, is rivalled only by humankind's transition from hunting and gathering into settled farming many thousands of years ago.

Critchfield's early works emphasized the continuities between today's village life and ancient human settlements. One of his central theses was that vil-

MARY ANN GLENDON, *Learned Hand Professor of Law at Harvard University, led the Vatican delegation to the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in September.*



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lagers everywhere share something like a common culture—characterized by the habits, routines, and outlooks associated with agriculture; by respect for religion, family ties, and property; and by habits of subordinating self-interest to family and community solidarity.

Over the 1970s and 1980s, when Critchfield revisited villages where he had once lived, he was astonished to see how profoundly those continuities had been unravelled. Not only were rural folk flocking to cities, but technology had been transforming every detail of farm and family life. Along with the tractor, television had arrived, and so had the birth control pill and IUD. The most radical change took place in ways of imagining reality. "Among the village people I knew personally, there was a marked difference: something had happened in their minds. They felt that the future would no longer simply repeat the past, as it had always done, but could be radically improved by all the new Western technologies."

The excellence of *The Villagers* lies in its vivid depictions of people and communities caught up in the sweep of profound political, economic, and social movements: Polish villagers adjusting to the collapse of state socialism; a Mexican village losing many of its inhabitants through emigration to the United States; an Indian village that went from subsistence to commercial farming between 1965 and 1970; Muslim villages in Egypt and Java, and Confucian villages in China and South Korea, undergoing modernization.

When Critchfield attempted to assess the significance of what he had observed, however, he was at something of a loss. His generally fine writing falters as he tries to move from description to explanation. Resorting to assertion rather than analysis, he categorically announces that "rural life is the source, and the only source, of such aspects of our culture as religious beliefs, the agricultural moral code, the institutions of family and property, and the work ethic." That dubious premise leads him to predict that if the common culture of villages collapses, the rest of the world will suffer dire consequences because "the way and view of life in villages like Ghungrali and Popowlany, so little changed from the day agriculture was invented ten, twelve thousand years ago until just the last twenty-five or thirty years, gave our unstable human society much of what stability it had."

Charles Fish does not attribute such culture-saving importance to country ways in his evocative memoir, *In Good Hands*. One reason is that he appreciates more fully than Critchfield what is gained, as well as what is lost, when the agricultural way of life disappears. *In Good Hands* is neither history nor reportage. It is to *The Villagers* as a painting is to a documentary film. From memory and empathetic imagination, plus a few family documents and his boyhood diary, Fish recreates the story of "The Farm" near Rutland, Vermont, where his mother was raised and his relatives have lived for six generations. A town boy who summered with his maternal kin, Fish had a certain emotional distance from the Farm and its ways even at the age of eight. His book both interrogates and celebrates the tradition from which he sprang.

In the United States, from the very beginning, there was a closer relationship between farm villages and nearby towns than in the developing countries where Critchfield did most of his work. Most of our farmers were not isolated from town life, and our townspeople long remained on intimate terms with the countryside. Hard as it is to imagine today, nearly a third of the American population was still engaged in farming on the eve of World War II. And, despite many earlier labor-saving inventions, it was only in the 1920s and 1930s that the farming way of life in this nation was fully transformed by technology.

Like Critchfield (and this reviewer), Fish was born in the 1930s "into the thinnest shadows of the vanishing era" of rural America. Critchfield's recollection of his native North Dakota could apply as well to the New England dairy country of Fish's Vermont, or of Granby, Massachusetts, where my great-uncle Lyman Gallup kept sixteen Jersey cows until the late 1950s. "There is just the faintest memory of village-like dirt roads, horse-drawn farm wagons, threshers pitching bundles by hand, and small farms where cows were milked, pigs fed, bread baked, vegetables canned, and chickens ran about underfoot." By the 1940s, that world was already coming to an end. Agribusiness was just around the corner; the days of the family farm were numbered. Today, the proportion of Americans who live on farms is a mere 2 percent.

Charles Fish's relatives are still among that dwindling band. Since 1836, when their "Founder," Henry Lester, moved to Rutland, members of the Lester clan have continuously worked and raised their families on the same eighty acres, converting from dairy farming to market gardening only in the 1960s. Critchfield would have recognized the Lesters of Fish's youth as partakers of universal village culture. Their world, as portrayed by a wandering son, was one where childhood was not clearly separated from adulthood; where work, play, and moral education tended to blend and merge; where sexuality was regarded as a powerful, unsettling force that needed to be tamed by manners and marriage; where "manly and womanly characteristics were sharply distinct in some respects"; where the connection between a family and its land lent meaning and dignity to the humblest tasks; and where there was much to remind the farmer that nature was not under his control. Henry Lester, like Critchfield (and Thomas Jefferson), believed there was a special relation between farming and upright living. In an essay written in 1833, the Founder opined that agriculture, more than

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

any other occupation, "tends to lead the mind to religion, morality, and virtue."

Fish's love for the Farm did not blind him to the shortcomings of the way of life under which it prospered, nor to the price it could exact from individuals. It struck him, in particular, that reason and spiritedness had to be kept in harness to the service of the Farm. Given free rein, those qualities, so essential to science and politics, could easily threaten the whole enterprise—by "changing the farmer into something else." Fish came to realize that the Farm cannot be home to people for whom the deepest satisfactions are in the search for knowledge. He came to admire men and women whose ambitions were devoted to larger and more public purposes. "They, too, plant, harvest, and preserve—[though] their efforts are more ambiguous and debatable."

In the end, Fish embraces an understanding of the Farm as an impressive example of humankind's brave and transient efforts to achieve order. He probably owes to the Farm his vivid apprehension of a truth that city cousins can easily forget: "All stability is an artful imposition of uncertain duration." In that light, "the farm, where peaceful people could live and work, was a remarkable achievement of wisdom and will, an island in the ebb and flow of history. . . . Measured against the common operations of our nature over time—lust, laziness, bloodshed, indifference—the higher forms of civil and domestic order are almost radiant."

Reflecting on the Farm and the fragility of order, Fish came to understand something else as well—that no way of life can endure without cultivating the qualities of character upon which it depends. Yet he concludes his beautifully written book with an image of religion on the scrapheap. On a recent visit to the Farm, Fish found in a storage barn, amidst the odds and ends of former times, a wooden signboard from the now-defunct community chapel where he had attended Bible school as a boy. This prompts his concluding reflections: "These things pass: the separate world, the divine mission. These endure: love, friendship, work, the land, a neighbor's helping hand. These lie in darkness: the fate of the republic, the shape of souls to come."

Though both Fish and Critchfield effectively rebut crude stereotypes by portraying country life in all its complexity, they both seem to accept an unduly simplistic attitude toward religion as an artifact that is passing away with the ways of life that supposedly gave rise to it. Critchfield, unlike most historical materialists, found the prospect of religion's demise alarming, because he viewed religion as useful to the maintenance of social stability. Fish, for his part, records the passing of the faith of his forebears with apparent equanimity. He tells the reader that the church bell no longer rings for him. "Choices are made. There is always a price."

Fish's portrait of the life and times of the Farm suggests, however, that what has passed away is merely a sort of religion that was sustained by little except habit and compatibility with a certain way of life. As Fish describes the religion of the Lesters, it endured without explicit theology, without ritual, and without durable institutions. The nondenominational chapel where Fish's grandmother took him in the summers was like my mother's small-town Congregational church, "short on doctrine and ritual, long on biblical stories, devotion, morality, and good works." As Fish recognizes, no way of life that diverges significantly from the general drift of the greater society can survive without an articulated vision of itself and without institutions to sustain its vision through changing circumstances.

In that connection, one of Critchfield's major contributions is to describe how the disintegration of an entire world of meaning—so unsettling for the men and women who experience it—has opened fertile ground for fundamentalism in the developing world. Closer to home, Fish's chronicle provides a glimpse into the process through which American liberal Protestantism has lost ground both to fundamentalism and secularism. For a religion to avoid those twin hazards in the turbulence of transition from one era to the next, it helps to possess an intellectual tradition to articulate and reflect on religious teachings, as well as durable institutions to make those teachings fresh for each new generation.

The human sciences and institutional frameworks, though, are the creations of city dwellers. It is no accident that cities and civilization have the same root. Thus Critchfield had it exactly backward: stability, in the sense of capacity to maintain coherence and identity over time, depends heavily on urban human achievements. He was prevented from seeing this by the same bias that led him to suppose that religion is born with and dies with rural life. Like many semi-skilled, semi-educated, knowledge workers, Critchfield simply supposed that religious faith is incompatible with a vigorous intellectual life.

Critchfield was right, though, to be worried about the condition of the world's seedbeds of character and competence, even if he was mistaken in locating them exclusively in rural settings. The political, scientific, economic, and social goods that Americans and many others have come to cherish depend, today more than ever, on certain qualities that once were reliably cultivated in the polis (ideally around 5,000 citizens in Plato's view) and in urban neighborhoods, as well as in villages. It is hard to imagine how a regime favorable to individual liberty, the work ethic, security of transactions, equality, and relief of misery can be sustained without citizens prepared to restrain their own appetites, plan for the future, render community service, provide for themselves and their dependents, and reach out to the needy.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In the United States, we have traditionally left it primarily up to families, schools, religious groups, workplace associations, and local communities to teach and transmit republican virtues and the skills of self-government from one generation to the next. Deprived of continuity by the mobility of our population, and of their mainstays by women's massive entry into the paid labor force, all of those mediating structures are in disarray. As for local governments, these little "schools for citizenship" as Tocqueville called them, have become ghosts of their former selves, with their powers siphoned off to distant capitals. The problem with the New England township today is not oppression but apathy. The town meeting has been reduced, in Fish's apt description, to a place where "selectmen and school directors are fighting over the remnants of a vanishing domain, for much of what they do is to administer the increasingly detailed agendas of the state and federal governments."

This is hardly the moment, therefore, lightly to dismiss the building blocks of civil society as intolerant, hypocritical, and oppressive. As one who has lived in a small town, a large city, and a suburb, my own experiences lead me to agree with Michael Sandel that "intolerance flourishes most where forms of life are dislocated, roots unsettled, traditions undone." A certain degree of hypocrisy may be the price that must be paid for a strong system of moral teachings that are difficult to live up to. As for oppression, let it be noted that those who label communities oppressive are often quite ready to permit distant apparatchiks to dictate the conditions under which we live and work. Oppression, to many who came of age in the sixties, is just another name for authority.

The generation that erased the distinction between authority and authoritarianism is now struggling to raise its children in a society where the former is collapsing and the latter is gaining ground. To save their children they must save the culture. That will require these busy people to find time for intelligent and vigorous involvement in the activities and institutions through which we order our lives together. As Fish says, "These lie in darkness: the fate of the republic and the shape of souls to come." FT

## The Fall of Art

First there was magic,
incantation;
    pure bulls
walking the walls of Lascaux,
bull leapers in Knossus.

Then worship, altars
raised to heaven,
    to earth;
Aphrodite sailing
her shell-white body,
Christ ascending
on his cruciplane.

And then perfection
worshipped as magic:
Phidias caressing marble thighs,
Michelangelo creating
David's consummate curve.

Now we bow before
    ego-scrawl,
subway canvasses
posed on pompous walls;
the id-beast loosed,
numbering the earth.

**B. R. Strahan**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

*Review Essay*

# At the End of Pragmatism

*Glenn Tinder*

**The Promise of Pragmatism: Modernism and the Crisis of Knowledge and Authority.** By John Patrick Diggins. *University of Chicago Press. 515 pp. $29.95.*

Christianity is essentially a contemplative faith. The ultimate purpose of life is to know God, and beyond this end there is no other end. Action is necessarily relegated to a position of lesser dignity than contemplation. The kingdom of heaven cannot be envisioned as a place where we shall be able to get a great deal done, for there will be nothing to do apart from rejoicing in God and in the glory of a redeemed creation. There we shall know even as we are known, and that will fully and eternally suffice.

It follows that Christianity necessarily presupposes "foundations." There must be realities—objects of contemplation—outside the mind and outside the concepts and words our minds employ. These, of course, are God and creation. In the kingdom of heaven we shall see God face to face and not play language games or playfully deconstruct the words that (assuming there will be words in heaven) will all reflect with perfect fidelity the Word. There is thus a deep antithesis between Christianity and the intellectual trends often characterized as "postmodernist," and it is hard to see how Christians can do anything, in the main, but resist these trends.

These matters are closely connected with revelation. Christians may agree with one tenet of postmodernism, if with no other, namely, that reason alone provides no access to foundations. Not only does it fail to disclose foundations; it fails to provide grounds for thinking that foundations exist. But Christians, of course, do not start from reason, even though they do not ordinarily hold reason in contempt. They start from revelation and from the faith in which revelation is received. Only after the foundations have been brought to light by revelation is reason called upon to illuminate the foundations further and to clarify faith. This is all quite plain in Augustine: first we believe and then, believing, we strive to understand.

Christianity is antithetical not only to postmodernism, a school of thought that is primarily European, but also to pragmatism, which is always and quite properly thought of as quintessentially American. Pragmatism has diverse forms. William James' openness to almost any idea that helps us, even if only by enabling us to feel better, is quite unlike John Dewey's emphasis on science as the authoritative guide to truth. And C. S. Peirce's exploration of dialogical pathways to truth contrasts with James' individualism, although it is akin to Dewey's embrace of democracy as the political method assumed by science. In all of its forms, however, pragmatism idealizes action. We discover truth not by theorizing but by trying out ideas in our individual and common lives; and once discovered, truth proves its worth by "working." In James' well-known phrase, truth is the "cash-value" of an idea. The stress on action in pragmatism appears simply because there is no other access to reality. There is no truth of the kind affirmed by Plato and Aristotle, or by Augustine and Aquinas: truth possessing intrinsic beauty and accessible to theoretical reason and to faith. There are no foundations.

Affirming action and denying foundations, pragmatism is necessarily averse to contemplation. Not that it is necessarily atheistic. As everyone knows, James explored religious experiences with great sympathy and sensitivity; and Peirce accepted the reality of God. But a follower of James, or Peirce, or Dewey could scarcely be an orthodox Christian and carry on a life devoted to participating eternally in the beatific vision. It may be hyperbolic but it is not baseless to say that a Christian's heaven—a scene of profound, everlasting inaction—must have some resemblance to a pragmatist's hell.

A young graduate student, unversed in Christian theology—which describes the present reviewer some decades ago—may find James charming and perceptive and may see Dewey as sober and balanced. The same person, after several decades of further experience and after becoming familiar with Christian insights—which describes the present reviewer today—may find pragmatism dismayingly shallow. How could a man of James' acumen be so offhanded in his treatment of humanity's enduring search for truth? And how could someone as wise and balanced as Dewey seems on the surface to be dismiss "natural rights and natural liberties," the time-honored grounds of constitutional democracy, as existing "only in the kingdom of mythological social zoology"? And how could thinkers with any claim to being taken seriously as analysts of the human condition be as indifferent as pragmatists were to history and the human past?

Glenn Tinder *is the author of* The Political Meaning of Christianity.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The disenchanted former graduate student may even find himself wondering whether there is something more sinister in pragmatism than an overly casual attitude toward such lasting human concerns as truth and the natural grounds of human liberty. Contemplation is a form of concentration on values such as beauty and truth. When action is set above contemplation, it loses its proper subordination to values. It is deprived of moral purpose and becomes an end in itself. And those pursuing it are apt to discover that the grandest forms of action are domination and destruction on a wide, or political, scale. They are apt to become committed to tyranny, imperialism, and war. If that overused and underdefined word "fascism" has any legitimate uses, one of them might be to characterize a commitment such as this.

John Patrick Diggins is concerned, in *The Promise of Pragmatism*, with the present-day repudiation of foundations and with the problems that repudiation creates. As his subtitle indicates, two problems are uppermost in his mind—that of reaching objective knowledge when, so to speak, there is nothing that knowledge can be about; and that of establishing authority on the basis of assumptions suggesting that, since no objective knowledge is available, one person's opinion is as good as another's. These problems arise from two corollaries of the postmodernist (in Diggins' usage "poststructuralist") outlook.

The first corollary concerns language. If there are no foundations, then language becomes like a ship without an anchor. It cannot be secured by attaching it to external realities. To elaborate on the simile, it also lacks portholes, for there is nothing outside to be seen, as well as navigational instruments, for there is nowhere to go. It is a prisonship, a craft built of words without meaning and destined to be everlastingly adrift. And that is not the worst of it. Lacking external referents, language becomes vulnerable to "deconstruction." Our prisonship of words is far from being a secure habitation. It is continually having holes torn in its sides, allowing the cold winds and seas of nothingness to sweep in. This is a way (mine, not Diggins') of indicating the problem of knowledge.

The second corollary of postmodernist antifoundationalism concerns power. If language cannot tell us of the truth, or be used to search for the truth, then philosophy, the love of wisdom, dies. It is replaced by rhetoric. It becomes an effort to convince—which is to say exercise power over—other people. All relationships become power relationships of one kind or another. In that situation, authority is inconceivable. If all speech is rhetorical, there can be no authoritative speech. There can be no relationships based on mutual recognition of the truth. Diggins does not put things in quite this way, but I think something of this sort is what he has in mind.

Diggins' principal subject, however, is not the antifoundationalism of present-day European philosophy. Such philosophy was anticipated, as he sees it, by the American pragmatists and is in some degree replicated in the thought of the major contemporary representative of pragmatism, Richard Rorty. Diggins also holds that antifoundationalism was anticipated by the framers of the American Constitution, who relied not on any foundational principles but on political mechanisms calculated to discipline and check governmental officials. Accordingly, while his book contains frequent references to European thinkers such as Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida, and Habermas, it is focused on James, Peirce, Dewey, and Rorty. Henry Adams is used throughout as counterpoint—a thinker who was as conscious as the pragmatists of the apparent disappearance of foundations from the modern mind but was less blithe than the pragmatists in assuming we could live very well anyway. And at various points Diggins discusses the Framers, especially Jefferson (not actually, of course, a member of the Philadelphia Convention) and Madison.

Diggins has mastered a vast range of difficult and complex philosophical material, and he subjects the thinkers discussed to a host of shrewd criticisms. Not many will read his book without learning a good deal. The general conclusion that emerges from his discussion is that pragmatism fails to meet the crisis of knowledge and authority. This, the reader may infer, is because it fails either to provide foundations or to show convincingly (and failure to be convincing is fatal if philosophy is really rhetoric) how we can live well without them. Diggins is invariably sympathetic and fair-minded, but pragmatism looks very tattered indeed when his account of it is finished. One is left wishing that other schools of thought, such as idealism and Thomism, had found American soil as congenial as pragmatism did; and one also wishes that the major American philosopher of our time were someone other than Richard Rorty. Perhaps the worst Diggins says about pragmatism is found in a statement that is mild on the surface but lethal in its effect. "In pragmatism," he writes, "one finds neither deep sensibility to alienation nor much anxiety about the eclipse of authority and truth." This is the dismaying shallowness of our native thinkers.

No such shallowness can be attributed to Henry Adams, who is perhaps, for Diggins, the great hero of American thought. One may surmise that Diggins is interested in Adams particularly because he was an historian, as is Diggins, and experienced at first hand what it means for an historian to find himself without foundations. The past unraveled in his hands, revealing neither reliable causal connections nor overall meaning. Unlike the pragmatists, with their insouciance about the human past, Adams realized the devastating consequences the disappearance of foundations has for our comprehension of the past, and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

this realization caused him profound anguish. Adams' near despair can be seen, in Diggins' account, as a badge of spiritual honor.

*The Promise of Pragmatism* contains a bewildering array of insights. This is said, of course, partly in praise. It is also said partly in blame. The reader may wish the book were less bewildering. Diggins' general attitude toward pragmatism is clear, but his intellectual position and critical orientation are not. To censure him for not providing a solution to the crisis of knowledge and authority would be asking for too much. But the reader may feel that he should have somewhere fused into a single theme his criticisms of pragmatism and of European antifoundationalism. Indeed, I must confess that I do not know whether his title is meant ironically—to suggest that pragmatism has no promise—or whether it is meant rather to suggest that pragmatists have so far failed to realize potentialities inherent in their own philosophy. In other words, I do not know whether Diggins feels that we must somehow rediscover our foundations, or whether he feels that, by following some method yet to be developed, we must simply learn to live without them.

Christian readers are apt to be particularly conscious of these obscurities. It is clear that Diggins is sympathetic to religious thinkers and themes. He criticizes Habermas for ignoring them, and he discusses Reinhold Niebuhr with manifest respect and approval. Yet a Christian may feel that so judicious a sampling of the food of faith is rather unsatisfactory. God is a somewhat peculiar reality and must either be in the center of the picture or else not in the picture at all. It seems that Diggins would like to have Him somewhere in the picture but not in too prominent a position. The consequence is simply that God disappears altogether, contrary to Diggins' intent, and that the favorable references to religion wither into significance. His general analysis is handicapped.

This happens, for example, in his analysis of sin. Diggins is critical of the optimism of thinkers such as Dewey and Habermas, and is manifestly conscious of the fact that human beings do not on the whole behave very well. He is, in a Niebuhrian sense, "realistic." Yet it never becomes clear whether he accepts—in a Niebuhrian sense—the concept of original sin, the notion that man is captive to sin and is unable through his own resources to be good. This is closely connected with the question of God. Diggins never mentions grace, and if you have no consciousness of grace then, of course, you must not push the concept of sin too far; you will find that you have construed the human situation as hopeless. This may be why Diggins neglects to think through the concept of sin. In any case, if I read him accurately, a rather serious confusion arises from this neglect.

Foundations may be unseen by us for either of two quite distinct reasons. For one, it may be that there are no foundations, which is, of course, the view held by the postmodernists. Or it may be that foundations are unseen by us because we have defective eyes; we lack normal vision. If this is the case, it must, on Christian terms, be due to our sinful natures. We cannot see reality clearly because we are turned away from it. Augustine holds this view. That Augustine affirmed foundations is not open to doubt, but his writings show throughout an acute consciousness that we are able to see these foundations at best only dimly and that this is because we are sinful beings. In his treatise on the Trinity, for example, he explores indefatigably analogies between divine and human nature that can enable us to envision the Trinity better; yet he insists repeatedly that the Trinity is ultimately incomprehensible to fallen beings like ourselves. The confusion in Diggins, if I am not mistaken, is that he does not sharply distinguish between what we might call the postmodernist and the Augustinian views concerning foundations. This confusion weakens his argument at two points.

To begin with, his analysis of the mind of the Framers is not entirely satisfactory. Diggins attributes to the Framers a skepticism about foundations that is virtually postmodernist. The idea is provocative and there may be some truth in it. It is hard, however, not to feel that it is overdrawn. Even the Enlightenment pointed toward foundations. More important, the Framers were heirs of a Calvinist worldview in which both foundations and original sin were emphatically affirmed. They may, much of the time, have seemed more like Deists than Calvinists. But the suggestion that they were—in 1787, in America—postmodernists of a sort is implausible. Surely the decisive consideration in their design of the Constitution, with all of its divided powers and its checks and balances, was human nature, not metaphysics or epistemology. At the very least, Diggins should have confronted this objection and offered stronger evidence in support of his argument.

The absence of a clear distinction between postmodernist and Augustinian attitudes toward foundations also affects adversely Diggins' discussions of Niebuhr. To begin with, although he is well-informed about Niebuhr, one misses in the Niebuhr he presents the *drama* of sin—which one can scarcely miss in Niebuhr's own writings. The tenacity of sin, along with the ironies it brings into human events, seems lacking from Diggins' account. To adapt Mark Twain's remark about his wife's efforts to mimic his profanity, he knows the words but not the tune. Worse than this, Diggins allows the impression to arise that Niebuhr, like the Framers, was a kind of postmodernist. But surely he was not. He was an Augustinian. He believed in foundations as unreservedly as did Augustine; these comprised not only God but an order of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

creation that was at least obscurely visible through conscience and reason. Niebuhr's depiction of the human plight, like the Framers' design of the Constitution, rested more on considerations of human nature than on considerations of metaphysics or epistemology. Diggins does not deny these things, but neither does he clearly set them forth, and this makes for a certain cloudiness in his discussion of Niebuhr.

In sum, when God is put on one side of the picture he will inevitably be found to have disappeared completely, and one way God's disappearance affects Diggins' book is by causing a certain inability to handle the concept of sin. But there is another way in which God's disappearance becomes manifest in *The Promise of Pragmatism*. This is in Diggins' neglect of the concept of revelation. Revelation and foundations are nearly inseparable concepts. In the Christian view, revelation is, in our fallen state, our one sure means of access to foundations. By way of New England Puritanism, it was the main source of the Framers' sense of foundations even though few of them may have given much thought to revelation. And it was the main source of Niebuhr's foundations. I suggest that it is Diggins' neglect of revelation that makes it possible for him to exaggerate the postmodernism and obscure the Augustinianism of both the Framers and Niebuhr.

Indeed, the problem of foundations is probably insoluble apart from revelation. It is arguable that "the crisis of knowledge and authority" that Diggins names in the subtitle of his book arose ultimately from the denial of revelation. With Descartes, there began an effort to base everything on reason, and what we see in postmodernism is that reason, unguided by faith, not merely fails to uphold everything, but destroys everything, even itself. Diggins does not face this fact. This is not because he is intellectually weak. On the contrary, he is an uncommonly discerning and serious writer. Nonetheless, it seems to me that he does not force himself to look unflaggingly at the ultimate questions underlying the crisis of knowledge and authority. How is it that so many thinkers, both in this country and elsewhere, have failed so signally to deal with this crisis? How is it that some of them, like the pragmatists, have failed even to see it? What explains the fact that after more than twenty-five centuries of philosophy and nearly twenty centuries of Christianity we find our lives—at least our intellectual lives—running along the very brink of nihilism? FT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Books In Review

## Victim and Victor

**Narratives of a Vulnerable God: Christ, Theology, and Scripture.** By William C. Placher. *Westminster/John Knox. 188 pp. $14.99.*

***Reviewed by*** **Gilbert Meilaender**

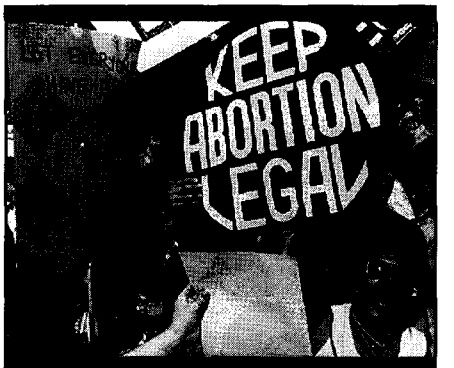
Over the last several decades the academic study of religion has been marked by a debate that, put much too simply, pits a "Yale school" against a "Chicago school." The Yale school has been associated especially with the names of George Lindbeck and the late Hans Frei, the Chicago school especially with David Tracy. But, of course, each school of thought is also represented by its graduate students, who have themselves become teachers in the academy.

Probably any simple description of the terms of this debate will seem to those involved to lack sufficient nuance, but we may hazard a few general observations. It is, in some respects, an argument between those who want to continue the Enlightenment project of making religion intelligible to its cultured despisers (Chicago), and those who hold that believers should concentrate on developing the particularities of their faith, whether that outlook makes sense to outsiders or not (Yale). It is a debate between those who want to translate Christian categories into terms thought to make sense to our contemporaries—and those who believe that this is the quickest way to irrelevance, and that Christians should not accommodate their views to the seeming "norms" of contemporary experience. So, for example, for one view the Christian ideal of love is probably best translated into language about respect for the dignity of every human being. For the other view the meaning of Christian love must grow out of the biblical story of God's love and commitment to Israel and to the world—especially, the story of that love enacted in Jesus.

The alternatives as I have depicted them here are perhaps too stark, and the issues are surely complicated, but one thing is clear. One might anticipate that adherents of the Yale school, having made their claim about the proper method for studying religion, would get on with the job of theological reflection itself. To continue forever reworking the debate about method is almost to undercut the force of their claims. Yet, paradoxically, relatively little first-order theological work has actually emerged from the Yale school thus far. *Narratives of a Vulnerable God* is, however, a happy exception to that claim. In seven engagingly written and clearly argued chapters William Placher has taken up important theological themes—discussing the nature of God, the story of Jesus in the Gospels, and the character of Christian community.

The book is, however, more captive to current assumptions than its author sometimes supposes, and I note a few examples here at the outset as a way of freeing myself to turn to other, more useful, topics. Placher is sensitive to a fault; nevertheless, an author should not be allowed more than one reference to the fact that he is a privileged white male. (And in connection with that reference, having been duly abject, he ought probably to note his good fortune in having attained a position in the academy before his status became something less than a privilege.) Introducing and appropriating Heidegger's discussion of time, Placher is a little apologetic. Given what we now know of Heidegger's personal and political failings, that is understandable. But, of course, no similar apologies are offered when he draws upon the thought of, say, Foucault, about whom we also now know a good bit. He approves the fact that early Christian communities were countercultural enough to challenge patriarchal social structures of their

Gilbert Meilander *teaches at Oberlin College.*




CEASE FIRE

TOM SINE

"The issues Tom Sine is addressing in this book are among the most important issues facing the church in the 1990s." —**Philip Yancey**

"An invaluable resource for Christians who desire political engagement but are apprehensive of the extremism on both ends of the political spectrum."
—**Senator Mark O. Hatfield**
*(Oregon)*

"A courageous call to Christians seeking to follow Christ in the midst of an increasingly divisive political and cultural climate. This is an important contribution that should spark controversy and thoughtful conversation."
—**Roberta Hestenes**
*Eastern College*

ISBN 0-8028-3799-9
• 312 pages
• Hardcover • $14.99

At your bookstore,
or call 800-253-7521
FAX 616-459-6540

5057 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
255 Jefferson Ave. S.E. / Grand Rapids, MI 49503

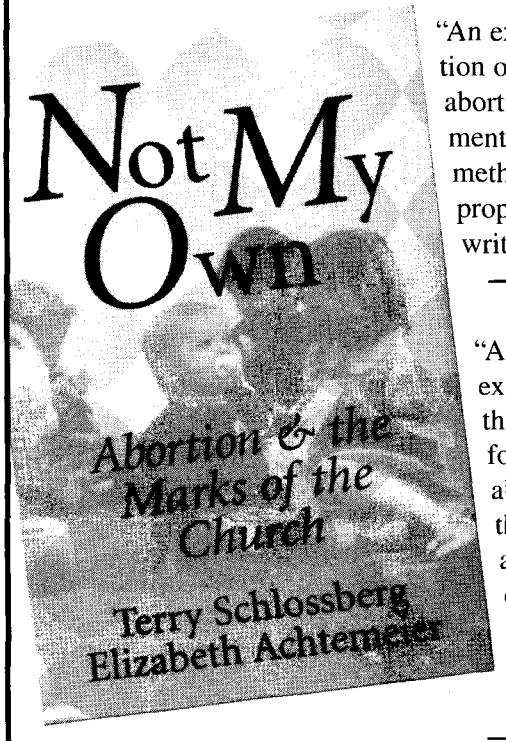
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

time but is less eager to consider that Christian communities, since they are *always* countercultural, might also have to challenge some currently fashionable feminist claims. He is worried that Christian calls to preserve the family bond even at the cost of self-sacrifice ignore the needs of abused women and children, but he does not seem equally worried that we are swimming in a divorce culture terribly harmful to children. Because entry into a country club requires approval of a membership committee, he notes (rightly enough) that exclusion, snobbery, and bigotry lie near at hand. But he does not also contemplate the way in which friendship necessarily excludes (without being exclusivistic). In his attempt to make vulnerability central to our understanding of God, he finds little if anything good to say about power. Eusebius is simply "Constantine's court flunky." And, acknowledging that Christians may sometimes feel driven to use force in a sinful world, he characterizes such a choice as "always" a betrayal of the "image of the power of love we have encountered in the powerless Jesus on the cross." The possibility that force might itself be a work of Christian love—that, as Calvin put it, the magistrate who refuses to bloody his sword dishonors God—is one that a Presbyterian theologian might take more seriously. In short, he mirrors the values and assumptions of the academy and much of our elite culture more faithfully than he seems to realize.

Nonetheless, Placher aims to be a theologian and a churchman, and there is much in this book that invites our own theological reflection in response. The structure of the book is roughly as follows. Three chapters argue that love, not power, is the defining characteristic of God, that God's eternity should not be described in a way that frees him from the burdens of time, and that the image of God as Triune is precisely an image of mutual love. Chapter four seeks to ground this vision of God in the New Testament Gospels—but always reading those Gospels in a manner that does not allow only one strand of the narrative to exercise power over other strands. In the fifth chapter Placher takes up briefly three critiques of that story of Jesus—that it presents a male savior who must be oppressive to women, that it presents a suffering savior who encourages victims to accept their oppression, and that it presents a unique savior whose claims must be offensive to adherents of other religious traditions. The last two chapters focus on community—the community of the Church, and the attempt to live as a faithful member of the Church within other communities (here, chiefly, the academy). In my own view, chapters three and four—discussing respectively the Trinity and the stories of

**A timely, tough-minded look at *the* moral crisis of our age.**

"Schlossberg and Achtemeier speak a word that is not often heard in today's mainline Protestant church. Taking the distinctiveness of the church seriously and building upon the classical theological stance that has characterized the Reformed tradition at its best, they help us to think through abortion in a bold, provocative way. Anyone attempting to think through the abortion issue in a faithful way must read this book."
— **William H. Willimon**
Duke University Chapel




"An excellent Christian presentation of the church's role in the abortion issue. . . . The arguments set forth follow a clear method. They are balanced, properly researched, and well written."
— **John Cardinal O'Connor**
Archbishop of New York

"A clear, reasonable, and extremely readable analysis of the total lack of justification for the church to be liberal on abortion. . . . This book is a thorough and unfaltering answer to those in the church who have fallen prey to the current culture's moral relativism and dangerous individualism."
— **Maria McFadden**
executive editor, *Human Rights Review*

ISBN 0-8028-0875-1 • 149 pages • Paperback • $10.99
At your bookstore, or call 800-253-7521 FAX 616-459-6540

5556 WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO.
255 JEFFERSON AVE. S.E. / GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN 49503

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jesus in the Gospels—are the strongest and most interesting chapters in the book.

Perhaps the book's central claim—certainly its first—is that we must overcome the tendency in Christian thought to emphasize God's power or God's invulnerability to the suffering that fills our world. Placher notes that a God defined solely in terms of power could not be relied upon to deliver us, for power itself is no guarantee of concern. Similarly, confessing God as Triune, Christians worship not One who is isolated in self-sufficient power, but One whose very inner being is marked by the reciprocities of mutual love. This "loss of self-independence in relation does not threaten individual identity but precisely creates it" in the being of God.

Surely Placher here unfolds a theme that has often been and should be a central emphasis in Christian proclamation. I suspect, however, that he must eventually qualify his claim more carefully if he does not wish to undercut the gospel itself. So worried is he that the image of a powerful God "comports well with many of the values that contemporary society still holds" that he largely ignores the fact that this image also expresses our creatureliness—our sense of contingency and dependence. Placher himself understands this, of course; he notes that avoiding the language of power risks avoiding talk of God as our creator and sustainer. Nevertheless, he does largely avoid such talk. If the desire for a powerful god reflects some of our values, the desire for a (simply) vulnerable god may equally well reflect our contemporary fear of dependence upon God.

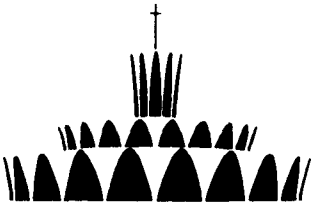
More important, however, an understanding of God as the powerful Creator on whom our existence depends is the necessary background for hearing the story of Jesus as gospel—for hearing it as the surprising and unexpected good news that the powerful God who created us is beside us and for us. Apart from that background, the story of Jesus can only be news, not the good news that it is. Similarly, the chapter on the Church as community perhaps moves too quickly to a conception of preaching as "retelling the stories" and underplays thereby the essential gospel proclamation that in the Jesus of these stories the powerful God is "for us." In short, Placher's instructive reading of the Gospels needs to place those narratives within the context of the larger biblical narrative—within the context of the Hebrew Bible, which is also Scripture for Christians.

At certain moments Placher himself must, in fact, appeal precisely to the language of power in order to depict accurately the message of the Gospels. For example, responding to the charge that the story of Jesus encourages victims to accept their suffering, and seeking a way to urge victims to fight back and avoid victimization, he notes that Jesus' suffering is not that of a passive victim. Rather, it is "the suffering of someone *out to win* in the struggle with evil" (emphasis added). He affirms language that speaks of Christ engaged in conflict, defeating the forces of evil, and winning a decisive victory. Thus, it turns out, "orthodox Christology does not offer a model of lying down and letting evil roll over you." Resisting such evil is not, it now appears, a "betrayal" of the gospel of the cross. In other words, in order to come to terms with a norm of contemporary culture, he has inverted the Augustinian—and, I think, better—notion that force used in defense of oneself is suspect, but force used in defense of the needy neighbor may be a work of love. To the degree that we seek to let biblical narrative depict the world within which we live, there is much to be said for that Augustinian view, however out of step with currently popular affirmations of the self it may be. And if we have succeeded in being this counterculturral, we may also find more room than Placher does for other forms of power in service of others—for example, a hierarchically ordered ministry within the church.

There is much else here that might also serve as food for reflection: Placher's willingness to identify becoming a Christian with entrance into a Christian community (contrary to the recent emphasis upon individual spirituality), his very clear discussion of the psychological and social analogies for the Trinity, a brief but helpful discussion of the relation between histori-


**PRAYER**

Do you want to pray? Have to pray? Have to keep trying? Are you searching for a life with prayer at the center? The deep stillness within from which all else flows? Your search may be leading you to become a Benedictine at Saint Louis Abbey. Come and see.



**For information write:**
**Fr. Ralph Wright, OSB**
**Vocation Director**
**Saint Louis Abbey**
**500 South Mason Road**
**St. Louis, MO 63141**
**phone: 800-638-1527**

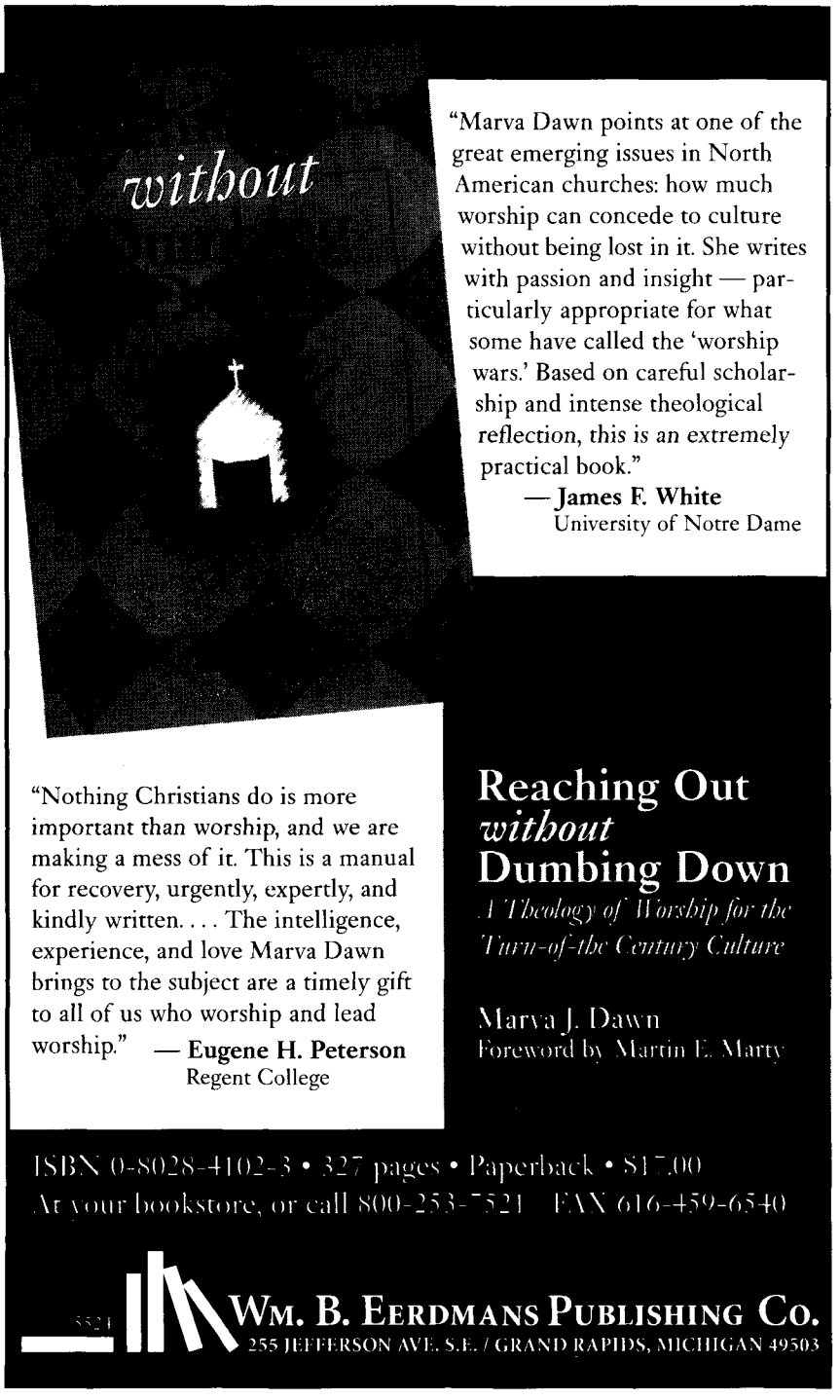

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cal research and the Gospels, an equally brief but equally helpful treatment of the relation of Christian faith to other faiths, and his seasoned and experienced discussion of the possibility of teaching Christian theology in the pluralistic academy. But questions of power and vulnerability are at the heart of the book, and if Placher's argument on those questions does not fully satisfy, it will nonetheless stimulate continued reflection on a topic of genuine theological significance.

*Coming in November*

What's Your Name?

Amy A. Kass & Leon R. Kass


without
"Marva Dawn points at one of the great emerging issues in North American churches: how much worship can concede to culture without being lost in it. She writes with passion and insight — particularly appropriate for what some have called the 'worship wars.' Based on careful scholarship and intense theological reflection, this is an extremely practical book."
— James F. White
University of Notre Dame
"Nothing Christians do is more important than worship, and we are making a mess of it. This is a manual for recovery, urgently, expertly, and kindly written.... The intelligence, experience, and love Marva Dawn brings to the subject are a timely gift to all of us who worship and lead worship."
— Eugene H. Peterson
Regent College
Reaching Out without Dumbing Down
A Theology of Worship for the Turn-of-the Century Culture
Marva J. Dawn
Foreword by Martin E. Marty
ISBN 0-8028-4102-3 • 327 pages • Paperback • $17.00
At your bookstore, or call 800-253-7521 FAX 616-459-6540
Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
255 JEFFERSON AVE. S.E. / GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN 49503

## Case for the Prosecution

**JOHN CARDINAL KROL AND THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION.** By E. MICHAEL JONES. *Fidelity Press. 550 pp. $35.*

***Reviewed by* Janet Marsden**

THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF of this journal tells me that he knows a Catholic editor who claims that all his friends are conservatives, his close friends are right-wingers, and his best friends are real-wingers. E. Michael Jones, editor of *Fidelity* magazine, is a real-winger making his way toward conservatism, very slowly. *John Cardinal Krol and the Cultural Revolution* is a wildly uneven and disjointed rant that, were it not so chock full of gossip and information, would be very easy to put down. As it is, one compulsively flips the pages in search of another really good part.

The first thing to be said is that this is in no way a biography, or even the beginnings of a biography, of John Cardinal Krol. For some reason, Krol, the former archbishop of Philadelphia who is now nearing ninety and in failing health, gave Mr. Jones access to the massive files covering his years as head of the archdiocese. The Krol connection is the hook on which Mr. Jones hangs his indictment of Catholic leadership—especially episcopal and academic leadership—since the Second Vatican Council. To be sure, Krol is not incidental to the story, for he was one of the most influential prelates in the American Church and was intimately involved in many of the conflicts the author recounts. More important than Krol himself in this telling of the story, however, is what many people may now be referring to as the Krol File.

Jones opens with his thesis that a culture war or Kulturkampf has been going on for at least forty years, and he presses the analogy with Bismarckian Germany somewhat farther than it can bear, but not with-

JANET MARSDEN *is a writer living in New York City.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

out telling effect. He begins with a speech of the late Leo Pfeffer, professor of law at Long Island University and counsel to the American Jewish Congress, that lays out the planned culture war pretty much along the lines that Jones says it has in fact been prosecuted over the years. The first of many missteps by the author is to assume that Pfeffer was an enemy of religion, when in fact he was a privately pious Jew. That was Pfeffer's point: religion is an entirely private matter and must at all costs be prevented from impinging upon public life. By his theory and numerous triumphs at the bar, especially with the Supreme Court, Pfeffer became the chief legal architect of the naked public square. Mr. Jones usefully cites from Pfeffer's own writings his most particular animus against Catholicism, and his delight when, after the Council, he believed he was witnessing the dissolution of what he called the "monolithity" of the Catholic Church. On that point, Jones agrees with Pfeffer, and does not hesitate to say (and to say many times) that in the culture war of these decades the Pfefferians have been winning almost every battle.

A WEAKNESS OF the book is that every subject reminds the author of something else, and he never has less than definite views on anything. In this long and rambling succession of excurses, however, questions are raised that deserve careful exploration by scholars who may be strongly opposed to Jones' unvarnished partisanship. Regrettably, these questions likely will not be taken up, thereby reinforcing Jones' argument that liberals refuse to face unpleasant truths.

The author's unpleasant truths come in many forms. The media and academic distortion of "the spirit" of Vatican II is hardly new by now, and Jones has little say on this that has not been said more effectively by people such as Josef Cardinal Ratzinger. The Krol File doesn't help him much here, since Krol, although in a key position at the Council, stuck to administrative concerns and tried not to believe that serious mischief was afoot. Here and elsewhere, although Jones obviously wants to be kind to the Cardinal, Krol comes across as an embattled ecclesiastical CEO who, especially on matters theological and intellectual, was in way over his head.

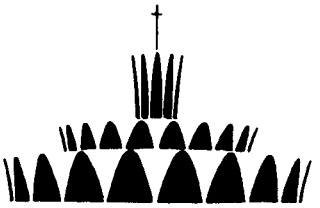
Very much deserving of further study is the story of what Krol would many years later call the academic "alienation of church property." The reference is to the curious ways in which Catholic universities and colleges, beginning with Catholic University and Notre Dame in the 1960s, effectively declared their independence from church authority. The author had access to transcripts of meetings at Catholic University that tell a chilling story of academic rebellion, led by the publicity-wise Charles Curran, and episcopal caving, led, so to speak, by Archbishop Patrick O'Boyle of Washington. Even before the protests orchestrated against the 1968 encyclical on human sexuality, *Humanae Vitae*, many bishops simply did not know what was happening to them and to the church they were supposed to be leading.

Equally intriguing is the role of Father Theodore Hesburgh, longtime president of Notre Dame, who, according to Jones, was actively collaborating with the Rockefeller Foundation in undermining church authority, and was declaring Catholic higher education to be independent of church control at the same time that he was increasingly subservient to the control exercised by secular foundations. This reviewer does not know enough of the inside story to judge the accuracy of Jones' account, but Jones produces enough evidence (also from the files of those on the Rockefeller and Planned Parenthood side) to warrant a detailed response from people more sympathetic to what Father Hesburgh was up to.

JONES OBVIOUSLY has a great interest in movies and popular culture, and the reader is treated to a persuasive telling of the demise of the Legion of Decency, the consequent abandonment of the Hollywood Production Code, and today's industrial production of pornography, hard and soft. Jones insightfully notes the way in which the Legion of Decency was, in effect, doing the work of the Protestant cultural establishment, and how the collapse of that mainline establishment made it impossi-


**WORK**

What about work? Education.
Pastoral work. Other ministries.
The harvest is rich, but the laborers
are few. Do you want to be a
laborer in the Lord's fields?
Your search may be leading you to
become a Benedictine at Saint Louis
Abbey. Come and see.



**For information write:**
**Fr. Ralph Wright, OSB**
**Vocation Director**
**Saint Louis Abbey**
**500 South Mason Road**
**St. Louis, MO 63141**
**phone: 800-638-1527**

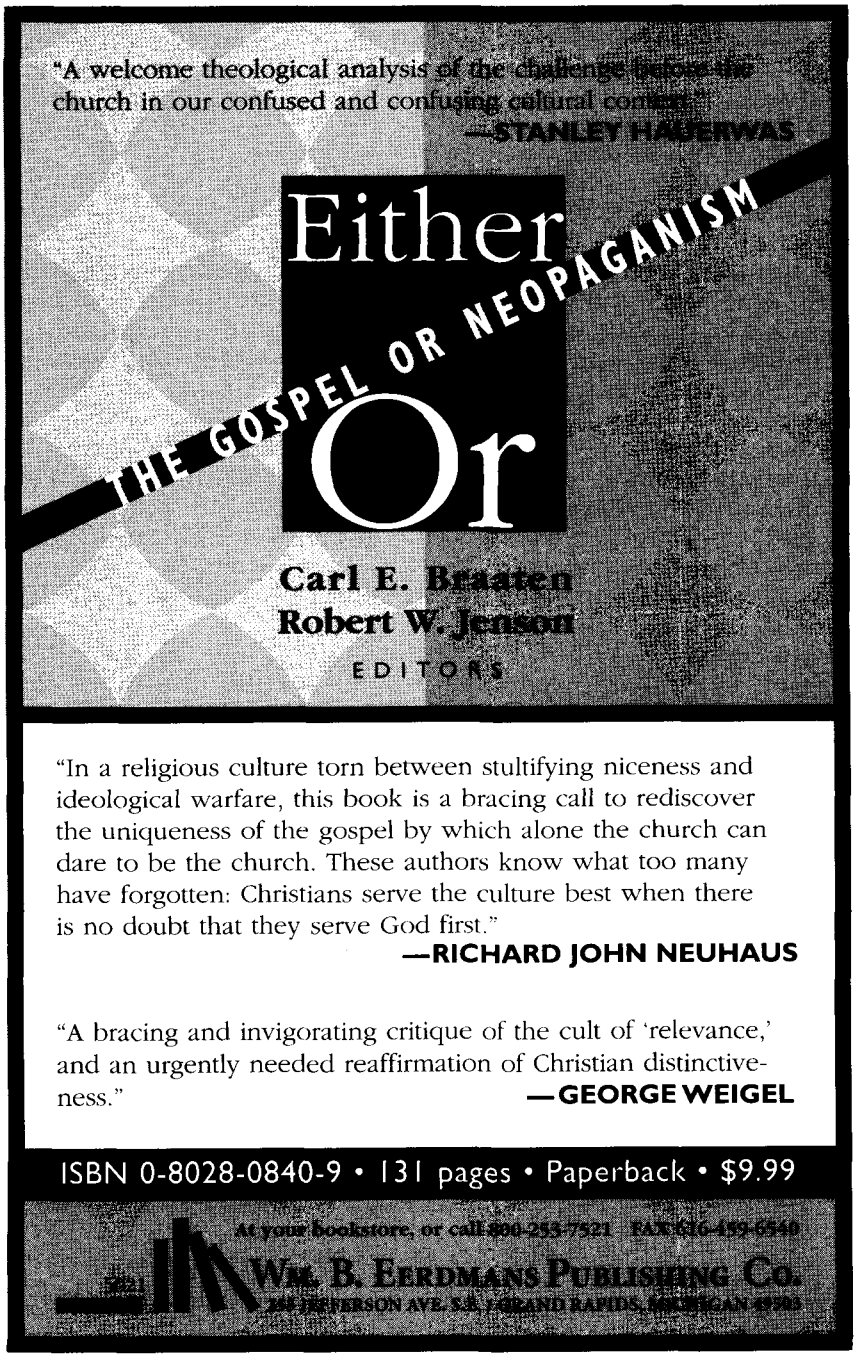

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ble for the Legion to continue to resist the opening of the sewage gates. It is also the author's contention that a good many Catholics, including Catholics responsible for the Legion, were eager to demonstrate their new-found "ecumenism" by joining the mainline in its collapse.

Many less interesting pages are devoted to the foolishness of liberal urban policy, in Philadelphia and elsewhere, that led to the destruction of city neighborhoods and the creation of the urban underclass. Jones is undoubtedly right in believing that Krol was on the right side of these failed battles, but he has nothing new to add to what is by now a fairly conventional analysis—other than coming repugnantly close to suggesting that racial segregation was a very good thing. Of greater importance is Jones' critique of Catholic conservatives, including some of his fellow real-wingers, who have made the substantive and strategic mistake of pitting themselves against the bishops *tout court* and have thus brought themselves, rather than their left-wing opponents, under suspicion of fostering schism. In recent years, to his credit, Jones has distanced *Fidelity* magazine from crazies on the right, and has paid a steep price in cancelled subscriptions.

If there is one unqualified hero in Jones' story, it is William Ball, the Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, lawyer who has over these decades proven himself to be the country's foremost legal champion of religious liberty. A close advisor to Krol, Ball has advocated genuine parental choice in education, successfully defended the Amish before the Supreme Court, and done battle with the United States Catholic Conference, the operational arm of the bishops that at times has seemed determined to turn the Catholic Church into another special interest group of the Democratic Party. And if there is one person Mr. Jones decidedly does not like, it is Michael Novak. Repeatedly he cites Novak's left-wing writings of the 1960s as a chief source of the evils to be deplored. Jones grudgingly allows that in recent years Novak appears to have had second thoughts, which is a little like opining in, say, 50 A.D. that Saul of Tarsus appears to have had second thoughts about the Christians.

This is not a well-written book—in fact it is a literary mess—but it is an important book. Again and again, one wants to hear the other side of the story, the alternative and more benign interpretation. But that task is not in the portfolio of E. Michael Jones. He is the prosecutor. In his presentation, the detail numbs, the rambling irritates, and the prejudices are raw, but he has made a case very damaging to persons and institutions responsible for much that has happened in American Catholicism over the last thirty


"A welcome theological analysis of the challenge before the church in our confused and confusing cultural context."
—STANLEY HAUERWAS
Either
THE GOSPEL OR NEOPAGANISM
Or
Carl E. Braaten
Robert W. Jenson
EDITORS
"In a religious culture torn between stultifying niceness and ideological warfare, this book is a bracing call to rediscover the uniqueness of the gospel by which alone the church can dare to be the church. These authors know what too many have forgotten: Christians serve the culture best when there is no doubt that they serve God first."
—RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS
"A bracing and invigorating critique of the cult of 'relevance,' and an urgently needed reaffirmation of Christian distinctiveness."
—GEORGE WEIGEL
ISBN 0-8028-0840-9 • 131 pages • Paperback • $9.99
At your bookstore, or call 800-253-7521 FAX 616-459-6540
WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO.
255 JEFFERSON AVE. S.E., GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN 49503

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

years. Now it is time to hear from the defense.

## The View from South Bend

**The HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism.** Edited by Richard P. McBrien. *HarperCollins. 1,349 pp. $45.*

***Reviewed by*** **Thomas Guarino**

A legendary story at Seton Hall University records this conversation between two freshmen: "What dorm are you in?" "Cabrini Hall." "Who's Cabrini?" the friend inquires. "Oh, he's the rich guy who donated the money to build the place." So much for the contributions—not to mention the gender—of Mother Cabrini.

This story comes to mind on reading *The HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism,* because one has the impression that it was written for undergraduates who have little or no idea of what was once the common world and parlance of Catholic culture. In fact, this is not far from the truth. The general editor of the one-volume work, Richard McBrien, notes at the outset that the encyclopedia was compiled "for the widest possible audience." This should be an important clue to the type of work it is. It is not a book intended for theologians or for scholars. It is intended as a handy reference for students or journalists who need a quick and succinct explanation of some Catholic term or practice. It is an indication of the intended audience (and a sign of the times) when a Catholic encyclopedia offers us phonetic help for Anno Domini (ah'noh daw'mee-nee) and Thomas Uh-kwinuhs.

The volume is the work of eighteen editors and 280 contributors, most of whom (from well-known theologians to Ph.D. candidates) have some connection with the University of Notre Dame, a link freely acknowledged in the general editor's introduction. It has some 4,200 entries ranging from Aaron to Zwingli, encompassing virtually every area of Catholic life: creeds, councils, history, and spirituality. Longer articles are signed and given more space; briefer articles are anonymous. The general editor notes that the intention of the work is to be informative, clear, and objective. Personal views, ideologies, and editorializing are excluded.

Students will be introduced to the meaning of such Catholic arcana as *aggiornamento, agnus Dei,* burse, buskin, ciborium, and cincture. They will learn of old time goodies such as custody of the eyes (a spiritual practice virtually impossible to implement today if one turns on a television), the *Dies Irae,* the distinction between *ex opere operantis* and *ex opere operato,* the Legion of Decency, occasions of sin, *partes inhonestae, parvitas materiae, sede vacante,* seal of confession, spy Wednesday, works of supererogation, *Tantum Ergo* (with verses in both Latin and English), *advocatus diaboli,* and the Forty Hours Devotion.

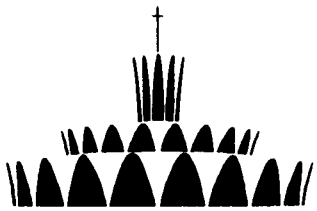
An entire range of theologians, ancient and modern, enjoy entries: Albertus Magnus, Augustine, Basil the Great, Cardinal Bellarmine, Avery Dulles, Tertullian, Henri de Lubac, Bonaventure, Yves Congar, Paul Tillich, Karl Barth, Rudolf Bultmann, Joseph Geiselmann, Cardinal Cajetan, Bernard Lonergan, and Hans Urs von Balthasar. Catholic political and literary figures are not overlooked, including the likes of Evelyn Waugh, Flannery O'Connor, G. K. Chesterton, Hilaire Belloc, William Buckley, and Mario Cuomo. The lives of the saints are briefly outlined and differing paths of Catholic spirituality are clearly detailed, including newer fields such as Spirituality and Psychology.

Although this is not a theological dictionary, most theological questions are examined. These range from more arcane topics such as the *de auxiliis* controversy to the major doctrinal beliefs at the core of the Christian Church. Some of these articles are models of precision and succinctness. The better ones include Revelation, Apostolic Succession, Conciliarism, Faith, Hell, Heresy, Homosexuality, Immortality, Inerrancy, Justification, Magisterium, Mary, Purgatory, and the Vicar of Christ. These have the merit of explaining clearly and concisely what the Catholic Church believes and why.

Thomas Guarino *is Professor of Theology at Seton Hall University.*

COMMUNITY

And then there's community. Living together with a family of brothers in lifelong commitment to the Lord. A lot of mutual support. Plenty of pain, and self-sacrifice, too. And deepest in it all, joy.
Prayer. Work. Community. With the Lord. Is your search leading you to become a Benedictine at Saint Louis Abbey? It was the Lord who said to those who first sought Him, "Come and see."



**For information write:**
**Fr. Ralph Wright, OSB**
**Vocation Director**
**Saint Louis Abbey**
**500 South Mason Road**
**St. Louis, MO 63141**
**phone: 800-638-1527**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Although clearly a Catholic encyclopedia, there are attempts to incorporate ecumenical and interreligious dimensions. The article on Anglicanism by George Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury, is accurate in documenting the growth of dialogue between Catholicism and Anglicanism over the years and the remaining obstacles dividing the two churches. The most significant Protestant historical movements and figures receive at least some treatment: Theodore Beza; Calvin and Calvinism; Luther, Lutheranism, and the Lutheran-Catholic dialogue; Methodism and the Methodist-Catholic dialogue; the Book of Concord; the Augsburg Confession and the traditional themes of *sola gratia, fide, et scriptura.* With an eye to interreligious dialogue, one also finds entries on such topics as Catholicism and Jews, haggadah and halakhah, Judaism, Talmud and Targum, Yom Kippur, the Koran and Islam. Catholicism in the various countries of the world is also well-documented, with many fine entries devoted specifically to Eastern-rite Catholicism.

The book contains some very helpful features, especially such lists as the thumbnail sketch of the twenty-one ecumenical councils recognized by the Catholic Church, from Nicea to Vatican II, along with their dates and accomplishments—though limited space somewhat curtails the list's usefulness. Two other useful features are an extensive liturgical calendar indicating annual feast days celebrated by the Church and an index chronicling the 262 occupants of the papacy from St. Peter onwards. An amusing list is that of patron saints. One can fairly guess that St. Augustine might be the patron saint of theologians and St. Francis Xavier of foreign missions, but who knew that St. Clare of Assisi is the guardian of television? And it was someone with a sense of humor who assigned St. Stephen as patron saint of stonemasons.

FLAWS MAY be found in the work, some light-hearted and others more serious. Among the former is a certain incipient Indianacentrism—certainly not as pernicious as the ominous Eurocentrism, but nonetheless a phenomenon to be carefully watched. Notre Dame is roundly proclaimed the "most famous Catholic university in the world," though one would think that the venerable Catholic University of Louvain has at least some claim to this title. Notre Dame's Laetare Medal is featured, though there is no mention of the various awards issued by other prominent Catholic institutions, e.g., the Aquinas Medal by the distinguished American Catholic Philosophical Association. Besides a legitimate entry on Theodore Hesburgh, one notes that that general editor in-

THE Bible in Modern Culture
Theology *and* Historical-Critical Method *from* Spinoza *to* Käsemann
ROY A. HARRISVILLE & WALTER SUNDBERG

"*The Bible in Modern Culture* is a first-rate contribution. It is a book deeply engaged with the history of German biblical scholarship and so a useful roadmap for those (especially in the study of the New Testament) who have taken their bearings primarily from the English and the Scots.... The book testifies eloquently to the ability of Augustinian convictions to transcend, even while absorbing, the Enlightenment assumptions that have dominated academic study of the Bible for the last two centuries." —MARK NOLL

"The most important issue for theology and the church in our time is the recovery of a dynamic role for the Scriptures in the concrete lives of our pastors and people in the era of the historical criticism of the Bible. In wrestling with this issue, pastors, theologians, and historians alike will find no better presentation of the background and the personalities than this sweeping panorama by Harrisville and Sundberg." —PAUL ROREM

"Whether or not one agrees with all of the assessments set forth in this volume, a careful study of it can serve to help clarify the proper relation between modern historical-criticism and the apostolic faith of the church. I would especially recommend the volume to evangelicals who wish to better understand that relationship." —ELIZABETH ACHTEMEIER

ISBN 0-8028-0873-5 • 293 pages • Paperback • $20.00

5534 At your bookstore, or call 800-253-7521 FAX 616-459-6540
WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO.
255 JEFFERSON AVE. S.E. / GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN 49503

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cludes a less clearly justifiable entry on himself. (Indeed, one wonders about several choices in this encyclopedia. Will the accomplishments of Teresa Kane, Rosemary Reuther, and Bryan Hehir be judged to have outstanding value in the long view of history?) Rather impishly included is an entry on Howard Engel, the general editor's physician.

Some minor factual errors occur. The bull *Exsurge Domini* only threatened Luther's excommunication; *Decet Romanum Pontificem* accomplished it. Leo XIII's encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879) stipulated that Thomism should be the principal philosophical and theological system taught not only in seminaries but in Catholic colleges and universities as well. Denzinger's famous *Enchiridion Symbolorum* (a collection of church teachings) has long since passed its thirty-third edition and its best English translation is now the one edited by the Jesuits J. Neuner and J. Dupuis. Bernard McQuaid did not found Seton Hall University; Bishop Bayley, Mother Seton's nephew, did.

More seriously, it must be noted that some of the articles are lacking in balance and theological precision. I mention only a few which indicate a certain flavor of the book. The article on the former Franciscan theologian, Leonardo Boff, says that he was "exasperated by the Vatican's persistent efforts to restrict his work." But surely anyone who has carefully examined Boff's ecclesiology, especially as outlined in *Church: Charism and Power*, will recognize that his teaching is no longer in harmony with fundamental Catholic beliefs about a hierarchically structured community. This clear departure from fundamental ecclesial affirmations, however, is not mentioned.

In a major article on the Catholic Church, the author writes of the Modernist period as if all of the excesses were produced by the magisterium. As Etienne Gilson wrote to Henri de Lubac, the Modernist suppression was, indeed, conducted by unreasonable men and led to unwarranted excesses. We do no service to scholarship, however, if we pass over the fact that a good deal of Catholic Modernism was an inheritance from nineteenth-century liberal Protestantism and was championing notions of truth, revelation, and doctrine that were unacceptable, then and now, to the Catholic Church.

The articles on the "brothers of Jesus" and on "St. James" conclude, baldly, that Jesus had four full-blooded brothers, children of Joseph and Mary. The question of siblings of Jesus can and should be raised by exegetes and theologians. But proper Catholic theological methodology, relying on Scripture and tradition, should take into account the long doctrinal, liturgical, devotional, and artistic tradition in the Church affirming the perpetual virginity of Mary. Should not the anathema hurled by an early Lateran synod (649) against those denying the perpetual virginity be, at the very least, wrestled with?

In several places in the encyclopedia, the papacy of John Paul II is called restorationist in character. One need not agree with every point uttered by the bishop of Rome to conclude that it is entirely too glib to say that the present pontiff is "dedicated to the containment of progressive ideas." The social encyclicals alone militate against this point of view. And what of the Pope's deep humanism, manifested in his concern for art and literature, for human spirituality? His very approach to the mysteries of faith is mediated primarily through existentialist and phenomenological eyes rather than the stolid rationalism of an earlier period.

A similar lack of nuance may be found in other entries. The article on the laity, for example, shows little appreciation of why the post-Tridentine period necessarily stressed the unique vocation of priesthood. The entry outlining the issue of women's ordination barely touches on the arguments proposed by *Inter Insigniores* or the quite different line of reasoning pursued by *Mulieris Dignitatem*. Henri de Lubac, the great theologian, is said to have become "reactionary" after 1970. It is true that de Lubac insisted that too much stress on the autonomy of the local church might harm the unity of the Church Universal, but he remained to the end of his life a staunch supporter of the reforms intended by Vatican II. It is said of the *Filioque* that the "vast majority of

NEW IN PAPERBACK
ALL IS FORGIVEN
The Secular Message in American Protestantism
MARSHA G. WITTEN
"This may be the best book ever published on the week-in, week-out content of ordinary sermons."
—Mark Noll
"Marsha Witten has written a stunning analysis of what contemporary Christians hear when they go to church. . . . This is a major achievement."
—Robert Wuthnow
Now in paper: $13.95 ISBN 0-691-10252-X
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS
AVAILABLE AT FINE BOOKSTORES OR DIRECTLY FROM THE PUBLISHER: 800-777-4726
WORLD WIDE WEB SITE: HTTP://AAUP.PUPRESS.PRINCETON.EDU/PUPRESS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Western theologians" believe it should be removed from the liturgical recitation of the Creed. This statement in itself is contestable, but it should at least be added that even many who support its excision do so on the condition that some statement be made by Eastern patriarchs attesting to the *Filioque*'s absolute orthodoxy. A photo caption describing the Church's magisterium portrays it as an "error-prone participation in the teaching authority of Jesus Christ." While one should acknowledge the reversibility of ordinary magisterial teaching, it is theologically fatuous to maintain that the magisterium is disposed to error. These examples indicate a tone and texture that detract from the encyclopedia's reliability as a guide to Catholicism.

One wonders if trying to compress all of Catholicism into a one-volume work, and concomitantly aiming to reach the widest possible audience, is feasible. Theological issues are difficult to compress. Rarely can they be accurately discussed apart from their historical and cultural contexts. What renders the limitation of space particularly troublesome for this work is that it tries to offer the reader not only the current state of Catholic teaching, but contemporary speculation on disputed questions. There is nothing wrong with this method per se, but its successful adoption indubitably requires the kind of space not available here.

On the level of historical issues, however, the encyclopedia is helpful and successful. The inquirer will discover the difference between canon law, the canon of the Mass, and the canon of Scripture. Students will see the difference between Ambrosian, Byzantine, Gregorian, and Mazarabic chants.

And Mother Cabrini will be unmistakenly identified.

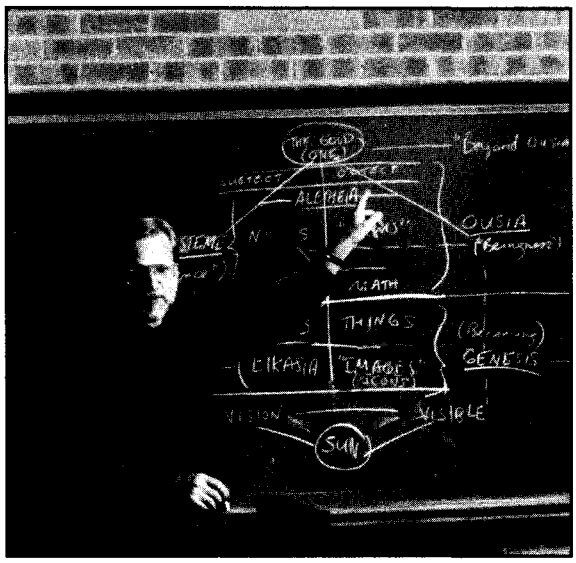
# Jung Love

**THE JUNG CULT: ORIGINS OF A CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT.** By RICHARD C. NOLL. *Princeton University Press. 387 pp. $24.95.*

***Reviewed by*** **Jeffrey Satinover**

"NOTHING IS possible without love," C.G. Jung once told Miguel Serrano, "not even the processes of alchemy, for love puts one in a mood to risk everything and not to withhold elements." Alchemy is the particular variant of occult spiritual doctrine on which Jung settled as closest to his own school of depth psychology. And, as Serrano explained, since Jung "revitalized the work of the Gnostics and the alchemists, he him-

JEFFREY SATINOVER, *past-President of the C. G. Jung Foundation of New York, is a psychiatrist in private practice in Westport, Connecticut.*




TRUTH AND VIRTUE.

FREEDOM AND JUSTICE.

REVELATION AND DISCOVERY.

At the University of Dallas, we believe
that these themes are the threads
which make up the fabric of the human experience,
and that they deserve our fullest attention.

UNIVERSITY of DALLAS

*The Catholic University for Independent Thinkers*
1845 East Northgate Drive • Irving, TX 75062-4799
(214) 721-5266 • (800) 628-6999

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

self had to participate in their mysteries."

Though not mentioned in Richard Noll's *The Jung Cult*—the most scholarly critique to date of the intellectual origins of Jungian ideas—Serrano's explanation confirms Noll's painstakingly documented contention that Jung was a willing exponent of the pan-Germanic occult-mindedness that preceded and nurtured the rise of Nazism. Serrano continues,

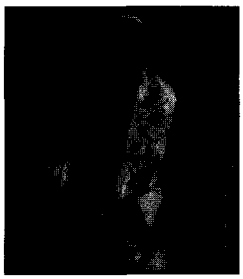
> In philosophic alchemy, there exists the idea of the *Soror Mystica* who works with the alchemist while he mixes his substances in his retorts. . . . At the end, there occurs a mystic wedding. . . . In the processes of individuation worked out in the Jungian laboratory between the patient and the analyst, the same fusion takes place. . . . It is a forbidden love which can only be fulfilled outside of matrimony. . . . While it is true that this love does not exclude physical love, the physical becomes transformed into ritual.
>
> Consider the Tantric practices of India, in which the Siddha magicians attempted to achieve psychic union. The ritual of the Tantras is complicated and mysterious. The . . . woman would usually be one of the sacred prostitutes. . . . Just as in alchemy lead is converted into gold . . . the act of coitus was really intended to ignite the mystic fire at the base of the vertebral column. . . . The woman is a priestess of magic love, whose function is to . . . awaken the . . . chakras of the Tantric hero. . . . The man does not ejaculate the semen, but impregnates himself; and thus the process of creation is reversed and time is stopped. . . . The product of this forbidden love is the Androgyne, the Total Man, all of whose . . . centers of consciousness are now awakened. . . .
>
> Jung, the magician, had almost alone made it possible for us today to take part in those Mysteries which seem capable of taking us back to that legendary land of the Man-God.

In 1932, Jung conducted a seminar on Tantric (or Kundalini) Yoga, the contents of which remain semi-secret to this day. (Only graduates of the Institute may purchase copies, and must sign an agreement not to reproduce their content.) The seminar participants were all current or former patients of Jung, at least one of whom—and probably more—had been Jung's own *soror mystica*. The text for the seminar was *The Serpent Power*, written in 1916 by an English


# EVANGELIUM VITAE

## Text and Commentary

### by Fr. George Rutler



Now, you too can **stand up with the Pope** in his battle to defend human life against the relentless onslaught of a pro-death mentality that is sweeping the globe forming what the Holy Father has termed, a "*culture of death*." Speaking to all the people of the world, as only a father can do with his children, Pope John Paul II launches an all out attack against the "culture of death" mentality that is literally murdering the human family.

In this remarkable series of 5 audio cassette tapes, Fr. George Rutler not only reads *Evangelium Vitae*, "The Gospel of Life" but provides a running commentary and explains what the Holy Father means when he says that "THE GOSPEL OF LIFE is at the heart of Jesus' message."

**In this encyclical, the Holy Father explains....**

- **the present day threats to human life,**
- **the Christian message concerning human life,**
- **God's holy law: "Thou shalt not kill"**
- **the evils of contraception, abortion, euthanasia**
- **the call for a new culture of human life**

Order this 5-tape series now for only $24.95 plus $4.00 shipping and you can begin a thorough study of the value and inviolability of human life and how to overcome this "culture of death" with friends, family members and parish study groups. **Order NOW!**

**REQUEST COUPON**

❑ **YES!** Send me the 5-tape audio cassette series *Evangelium Vitae* "The Gospel of Life" (#5512) for just $24.95 plus $4 shipping (Calif. residents add 8.25% sales tax).

❑ Check or money order enclosed $_____. Charge my

❑ Visa or ❑ MasterCard.

Card #_____ Expires____

Signature _____

Name_____

Address_____

City/State/Zip_____

Send to: **St. Joseph Communications, Inc.,**

P.O. Box 720, West Covina, CA 91793. Tel. 1-818-331-3549.


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

aristocrat and Tantric initiate, Sir John Woodruffe, who published it under the telling, Grail-related pseudonym, "Arthur Avalon." The book remains for occultists to this day the classic study of Kundalini Yoga. Together with its companion volume, *Tantra*, it explains in detail, defends—and predicts as the coming religion of the future—sexual initiation into "higher consciousness," the transcending of good and evil, the divinity of the material world and worship of "the goddess." Handcopies of plates from this book hang at the offices of the New York branch of the Psychological Club, founded by a female patient and possible *soror mystica* of Jung's, Kristine Mann.

These 1932 seminars were led jointly by Jung and Wilhelm Hauer, founder of the so-called German Faith Movement. This movement sought to replace traditional Christianity with an Aryanized Christ, to replace worship of the Jewish God with worship of a Mother Goddess, and to replace the traditional Eucharist with occult initiation (in the spirit of the Grail legend as interpreted by Wagner). It aimed to resurrect the pagan vitality that, in line with the ideas of Nietzsche and others, purportedly had been all but killed by an all-too-Jewish Christianity. As Hauer put it, "The basic religious feelings are Union, Blessedness, and Holiness. The Christian sentiments of Sin, Guilt, and Repentance are not really religious feelings. They are artificially engendered complexes in man."

Shortly after the seminar, the German Faith Movement was officially adopted by the ascendant Nazi party as the official religion of Germany. Though Jung then somewhat distanced himself from Hauer's official position, he continued to urge Hauer that they publish together and hold joint seminars on "comparative religion."

Do MODERN Jungian analysts, then, consider themselves the inheritors of this "new" Aryan religion? Noll acknowledges that in spite of the striking congruences of contemporary Jungianism, modern liberal theologies, "spirituality" movements, and the German Faith Movement, the vast majority of Jungian analysts today see themselves simply as mental health professionals—like any others, though with a keener than average interest in religion and matters spiritual. Few will recognize either themselves or their patients in Noll's reconstruction (nor, I dare say, in this review). Only a small minority have ever been involved in relationships such as the ones Serrano describes above and which Jung himself apparently indulged in on more than one occasion (Antonio Wolff, his mistress of forty years and another Club and Tantric Yoga participant, was his chief extramarital *Soror Mystica*); most modern Jungians would not even dream of seeking such a thing. Not a few of those who have tried have been thrown out of practice altogether, by the Jungian institutes themselves.

Gnostic and occult ideas are obviously the predominant feature of Jungian thought. Nonetheless, most people remain unaware of the fact that the occult ideas on which Jung worked were hardly original discoveries of his, as Jung leaves the impression they were; such ideas were ubiquitous in the decaying culture centers of Middle Europe in the years prior to World War II. Most people remain equally unaware that occult practices also lie at the heart of Jung's own theory, clinical practice, and inner experiences. For the most part this is because these ideas have been presented in the Jungian literature, are explained in Jungian training, and when they appear in patients' dreams will be interpreted almost exclusively in symbolic terms, not literally. So, for example, an alchemical picture of a man and woman coupling in a bath—or a dream of something similar—will be taken solely as a metaphor, of a "union of opposites."

It can and should be argued that even so, these occult ideas tend to undermine moral standards. The very concept of a "union of opposites," especially at its supposedly highest level—the reconciliation of good and evil—is the dangerous Nietzschean vision found everywhere in Gnosticism, occultism, and, indeed, outright Satanism. And yet even critics of the Jungian scheme have failed to see that, however decent, sincere, and conventional are many of Jung's followers, Jung himself had found a way to live out not only symbolically but explicitly the core practices of occultism.

The veil is thick indeed. Miguel Serrano published his book on Hesse and Jung with Schocken, the Jewish house that specializes in Jewish mysticism and in the works of such great Israeli scholars as Gershom Scholem (who was likewise a sometime colleague of Jung). And yet in 1975, *Life* magazine published a photograph of the Argentine funeral of a former high-ranking Nazi officer, showing Serrano and two compatriots, in long black leather coats, offering their departed col-

FIRST THINGS
Subscription Information

**Address Changes**
Please notify us as soon as possible of your address change as well as the effective date of change. Be sure to include an address label with your old address or your subscriber account number. Please allow 4 to 6 weeks for the change to take effect.

**Missing or Damaged Issues**
If your copy of FIRST THINGS is damaged or missing, we will replace it as quickly as possible. Let us know the date of the issue and send your subscription mailing label if available. For fastest service, call toll free at 1-800-875-2997.

**Subscription or Billing Problems**
We strive to provide the most reliable service possible. Please let us know immediately if your delivery is late or erratic. We'll do all we can to correct the problem. Write us at:

FIRST THINGS
Subscription Department
P.O. Box 3000
Denville, NJ 07834

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

league the stiff-armed Nazi salute.

Only now, at a time when Jungian and Jungian-related spirituality—with its emphasis on Gnostic "wisdom," sexual freedom, goddess worship, and accommodation with evil—has infiltrated deeply into the Church (especially in the Anglican and Roman communions) has the veil at long last begun to be lifted. Though Jung has had his critics over the years, none need be taken so seriously as Noll, a clinical psychologist, fellow in the history of science at Harvard, self-described "lapsed Catholic," and former Jungian enthusiast who, in a recent interview in the *Wanderer*, now assesses Jung as the greatest threat to the Church since Julian the Apostate.

*The Jung Cult* provides an encyclopedic survey of the intellectual atmosphere in Middle Europe during the years that Jung formulated his psychological system. He demonstrates that most of Jung's ideas were not original, but arose elsewhere within the milieu of world-weariness, cynicism toward tradition, and enthusiasm for cultic Eastern mysticisms—mysticisms that were everywhere being hungrily swallowed in place of a Christianity widely believed by the cultural elites to be hopelessly superstitious and moribund.

Jung was a twentieth-century *Naturphilosoph*, Noll demonstrates, filled with the romance of the soil. (It is de rigueur for Jungian devotees to make a pilgrimage to Jung's second home at Bollingen, where he lived as a self-described "man of the Middle Ages" and where he could therefore be his "true self.") He considered himself to have undergone a primordial experience of pagan solar initiation, but on his own, not in the context of a formal occult society or ritual. A prominent influence on Jung, Ernst Haeckl, belonged to the Thule Society, an explicitly occult group that numbered among its members many of Hitler's intimates, including Julius Streicher and Rudolph Hess. (In time the society came to see in Hitler the "Aryan Messiah" long prophesied by occultists.) But Jung himself would never have dreamed of joining such a society, however many of its ideas he might incorporate into his evolving worldview. What was truly original, and brilliantly successful, was the way in which Jung wedded his own personal experience to the racial occult theories then to be found everywhere, and to syncretize the construction under the aegis of psychoanalysis.

Jung's relationship to Wilhelm Hauer provides a good example of how Jung related to the occult spirit wherever he found it. Hauer, formerly a Protestant churchman, aimed to debunk once and for all what Goethe called the "fairy tale" of Christianity. But like many in those days, he was no more willing to accept a completely demythologized Freudian psychoanalysis. So he set about to establish an alternative, becoming one of the founders of the Neo-Pagan movement in Germany, a movement whose headquarters was Tübingen, birthplace of the "higher criticism."

Jung took these neo-pagan and Eastern ideas and wedded them to the newly emerging, more rational-seeming "science" of psychoanalytic psychiatry. He thereby created a unique vehicle for occult ideas to enter the culture—a vehicle that carried the respectability of a clinical profession and avoided the secret-handshake pomposity of the typical occult circle.

But an important reason for the power of the Jungian movement is precisely how un-secret Jung's psychiatric reformulations of occult ideas made it possible for Jungianism to be, especially in a world starved for spirituality. A conspiratorial model was and is completely unnecessary to understand Jung; indeed, its absence provides the most obvious defense against the accusation that Jung was an occultist at all. Furthermore, the influence of Jung's "cult" lies almost wholly in the world of ideas and does not flow from any financial or political power it wields (which is negligible, contrary to claims in the later parts of Noll's book).

In Noll's reading, Jung stands in a long-developing line of German-speaking European intellectuals who in the years prior to World War II were actively dismantling the remains of a nearly dead Christianity and rebuilding a "new" religion to take its place. The core "mystery" to be grasped by the devotees of this religion was "identification with the sun-god." A theistic God was a fairy tale: the true god lies within "the Self." To experience Her/Him is to have grasped the secret of immortality. Such a "faith" is really no faith at all, but a form of experience-based knowledge, superior because it requires no sacrifice of the intellect, as do superstitious "faiths."

The Nazis implemented some of these ideas, heretofore known and accepted only by an elite, in the context of a mass political movement. Jung therefore spoke of the movement rather approvingly at first. Eventually he came to see some of its

**Books for the Culture Wars**

WRS Publishing, a commercial publisher, seeks books on character-building, education, child-rearing, and cultural criticism.

For information on submitting a proposal, call or write to:

WRS PUBLISHING
Dept. 4, P.O. Box 21207, Waco, TX 76702-1207
800-299-3366

*Loome Theological Booksellers*
*320 North Fourth Street*
*Stillwater, Minnesota 55082*
*612-430-1092*

- The largest stock of out-of print religious books in North America
- Specialists in scholarly titles in all languages
- Written want lists welcome; catalogues issued
- Libraries appraised & purchased anywhere in North America

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dangers—warning that the Nazis had, as it were, hijacked the spiritual revolution and turned it to dire ends. They took too direct and too severe an approach to solving problems, including the problem universally recognized as crucial among occultists: how the "over-civilized" Jews and their ideas (including Christianity) tend to drain the life-force from the more youthfully mystic Aryans.

Jung's Psychological Club was more moderate in its approach to this same problem: it merely maintained a secret appendix to its by-laws, known only to Jung himself and to his innermost circle, that capped the percentage of Jews allowed membership.

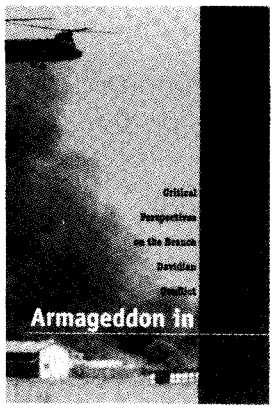
But the war and the attempted extermination of the Jews for racial/mystic reasons rather poisoned the occult well for everyone. Jung did eventually repudiate the Nazis themselves (he even removed the Jewish quota from the club—although it took him until four years after the extermination camps were revealed to do so). Against accusations of anti-Semitism and Nazi sympathizing, he was able more-or-less successfully to defend himself, largely because he had so many Jewish colleagues and disciples who could testify to his loyalty and assistance. But it remains true that many of the doctrines the Nazis adopted as their own were indeed central to Jung's worldview.

In Noll's opinion, Jung—obliged to distance himself from the more openly Aryan occult theories of which he was most fond prior to the war—found alchemy a more suitable, less tainted form of occult expression. Though Jung had been well aware of alchemy at least since the twenties, he concentrated on it only after the war.

Jung, in other words, was not a true "proto-Nazi," according to Noll, because he had no political agenda, but he drank deeply at the same Arcadian fountain as they. "The evidence is compelling that Jung's work arose from the same Central European cauldron of neo-pagan, Nietzschean, mystical, hereditarian, volkisch utopianism out of which National Socialism arose."

THIS IS THE burden of Noll's book, and he has done a remarkable job of documenting his case. But for all the dark material he has unearthed and pieced together, I think he fails to draw the most important conclusions. The material cries out for interpretation, and indeed, in the latter parts of the book Noll's tone changes dramatically and becomes directly hostile.

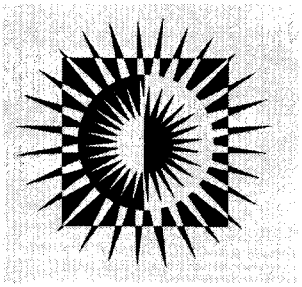
Yet even the criticism Noll allows himself misses the mark. Jungian psychology has become a psycho-spiritual Amway-style franchise, Noll contends, driven primarily by


**Armageddon in Waco**
CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE BRANCH DAVIDIAN CONFLICT
**Edited by Stuart A. Wright**
In this, the most detailed, wide-ranging analysis of events surrounding Waco, leading scholars in sociology, history, law, and religion explore all facets of the confrontation in an attempt to understand one of the most confusing government actions in American history.
*Paper $15.95 432 pages Cloth edition available*

**The Fragility of Freedom**
TOCQUEVILLE ON RELIGION, DEMOCRACY, AND THE AMERICAN FUTURE
**Joshua Mitchell**
"A quite brilliant piece of work. . . . The thesis of this work is that Tocqueville saw that the wellspring of renewal and balance for American democracy, if it is to maintain its best features, is found in the Christian tradition. . . . A refreshing and candid confrontation with the prevailing orthodoxies in political philosophy and political science."—Timothy Fuller, Colorado College
*Cloth $34.95 288 pages*

**Securing Religious Liberty**
PRINCIPLES FOR JUDICIAL INTERPRETATION OF THE RELIGION CLAUSES
**Jesse H. Choper**
"If this book is not a surefire answer to guaranteeing religious liberty without affording special privilege, it may be as close as a professor of law can come to answering the essential conundrum of the Religion Clauses of the First Amendment."—Philip B. Kurland, University of Chicago
*Cloth $24.95 212 pages*



**Fundamentalisms Comprehended**
**Edited by Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby**
This final volume of the landmark Fundamentalism Project builds upon the entire series to provide an explanatory framework for understanding and comparing fundamentalisms around the world.
*Cloth $45.00 528 pages*
*The Fundamentalism Project, Volume 5*

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
5801 South Ellis Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60637


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

money. Religious seekers are promised what is tantamount to (but not called) occult initiation, and thereby suckered into lengthy "analysis" at exorbitant cost. Many become trainees themselves, in hopes of recouping their losses by moving up the food chain. The sharpest of these in time become training analysts who have earned the right to feed on the most compliant of prey: new trainees.

There is a certain amount of cynical truth to this take on the official Jungian movement—I have seen it at work myself from within. But the same degree of self-interest is at work in every professional guild: organized clinical psychology (Noll's profession), psychiatry (my own), social work, law, and so on. The master-apprentice system itself is built upon such a process and is inevitably open to a common set of abuses.

Abuses, of course, tend to grow in proportion to the extent that the criteria for success within any given guild are subjective rather than objective; for all the loud protestations of objectivity, the criteria for success within *every* mental health profession are notoriously subjective.

Such subjectivity is at work within the Jungian domain and within organized psychiatry, in both of which candidates may be accepted or rejected for training more because of ideological compliance than genuine qualification. Psychiatry tends increasingly to seek and enforce political correctness among its members; Jungians do too, nowadays to a greater extent than even psychiatry, in spite of Jung's superficial conservatism.

The fact is that as a subset of the mental health professions, the Jungians have evolved into a rather typical school of psychotherapy, on balance no better or worse than others. Training is now heavily dependent upon a cross-section of theoretical models and practice schemata, by no means purely Jungian. Neo-Freudians, Kohutian self-psychologists, British object-relations theorists, standard DSMIV psychiatric diagnosticians, and others now have honored and time-consuming places in the typical Jungian curriculum.

The original occult initiation process envisioned and propagated by Jung and perhaps actually experienced by him and by some of his inner core of disciples has for the most part disappeared. This is certainly true of that process as it may have been acted out concretely, and not just symbolically—a rising tide of undue familiarity cases (to which other mental health professions have been similarly subject) has all but eliminated the possibility that "mystic marriages" could be safely consummated in bed. Newly devised ethics codes make taboo even mod-


# THE TRIVIALIZATION OF GOD

## *The Dangerous Illusion of a Manageable Deity*

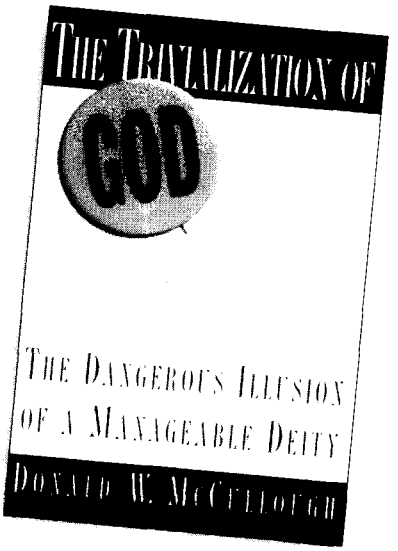
Donald W. McCullough, President, San Francisco Theological Seminary

"Don McCullough knows the difference between Christ and culture and shows us how to tell the difference. His sharply articulated insights guard us from foolish religion and silly spirituality, both of which are epidemic in our land. A most welcome book: sane, incisive, prophetic."
—EUGENE H. PETERSON,
Professor of Spiritual Theology at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia, and author of *The Message: New Testament with Psalms and Proverbs*

"Don't be misled by the title. This book isn't mostly about us and what we have done to God—turning Him into a lot of trivial godlets. It's really about God—the Holy God, totally Other and totally Love—and what He does to us."
—DR. ELIZABETH ACHTMEIER,
Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Virginia

"In a lively, vividly illustrated book, Donald McCullough challenges our contemporary idolatries, recalls us to the adventure of Christian worship and praise of the Living God."
—WILLIAM H. WILLIMON,
Dean of the Chapel, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina

"McCullough's compelling new book startled me with its exposure of my sneaky devices for managing my God. It is, I believe, God's own most urgent word for Christians and churches today: 'Let Me be the Lord and Maker that I am.' This book awakens us to our tricks with a clarity, a concreteness, and a kindness that makes us glad to come to our senses."
—LEWIS B. SMEDES,
Senior Professor of Ethics, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California




*The Trivialization of God: The Dangerous Illusion of a Manageable Deity* (Donald W. McCullough) Hardback/0-89109-909-3/$16.
Available at your local bookstore or call 1-800-366-7788 and ask for offer #1727.

NAVPRESS
BRINGING TRUTH TO LIFE


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

est self-revelation by analysts. In other words, it is no longer professionally prudent for Jungian analysts to engage in the kind of "mutual individuation" romanticized by Jung, however much Jungian rhetoric may claim that such a process still occurs. In short, the Jungian professional guild has become considerably less rogue than Noll tries to paint it.

The real problem is not the Jungian guild, it is Jungian spirituality, and this touches on Noll's assessment that Jung was not really a "proto-Nazi." That may be true, but occult ideas provided the soil in which Nazi-like phenomena flourished, and one may argue that not only *can* they thus flourish, but that given the sufficient tilling of that particular soil they almost certainly *will*.

Jung was not himself a major influence in the outburst of occult-mindedness in prewar Europe; he was rather the recipient of this influence from others, as Noll documents. But having absorbed, digested, and resynthesized in brilliant fashion what he received, he has become its major fount in its postwar re-eruption—an eruption no longer confined to Middle Europe and a few English aristocrats and civil servants, but spread out across the globe, especially to America. As Jung himself foretold sixty years ago in his essay on the Norse god Wotan and Nazi Germany:

> National Socialism [is] . . . not . . . the last word. Things must be concealed in the background which we cannot imagine at present, but we may expect them to appear in the course of the next few years or decades. Wotan's reawakening is a stepping back into the past; the stream was dammed up. . . . But the obstruction will not last forever . . . the water will overleap the obstacle.

Much of what we now see happening in the domains of religion and spirituality and culture can be laid at Jung's doorstep—the modern amalgam of goddess worship and polytheism; the replacement of morality-oriented Jewish and Christian worship with ancient pagan initiation rituals; resurgent pantheism in scientific and pseudo-scientific guise; and above all a brutal moral relativism (that is, the reconciliation of good and evil).

In short, in place of his rather feckless attack on the Jungian "guild," an expanded version of Noll's off-the-cuff remark concerning Jung and Julian the Apostate belongs in his book. For it is Jung's *spiritual* influence that is the real danger, not the rather modest financial success of his followers' practices. The latter has only followed from the more important spiritual effects, not from the cleverness of its organization and management.

How dangerous are these spiritual effects? Heinrich Heine, the nineteenth-century German-Christian-Jewish poet, peered a century into his nation's future and saw the result of neo-pagan revisionings of religious tradition. His words should be a caution to us as well:

> Should ever that taming talisman break—the Cross—then will come roaring back the wild madness of the ancient warriors, with all their insane, Berserker rage, of whom our Nordic poets speak and sing. That talisman is now already crumbling, and the day is not far off when it shall break apart entirely. On that day, the old stone gods will rise from their long forgotten wreckage and rub from their eyes the dust of a thousand years' sleep. At long last leaping to life, Thor with his giant hammer will crush the gothic cathedrals. And laugh not at my forebodings, the advice of a dreamer who warns you away from the . . . *Naturphilosophen*. No, laugh not at the visionary who knows that in the realm of phenomena comes soon the revolution that has already taken place in the realm of spirit. For thought goes before deed as lightning before thunder. There will be played in Germany a play compared to which the French Revolution was but an innocent idyll.

The Center for Public Justice

presents the inaugural

**KUYPER LECTURE**

"Adding Cross to Crown: Religion and Politics in the American Experience"

**Mark A. Noll**

author, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*
professor of history, Wheaton College

Prof. Max L. Stackhouse of Princeton Theological Seminary and Prof. James D. Bratt of Calvin College will respond.

Wednesday, November 1, 7:30 P.M.
Calvin College
Grand Rapids, Michigan

For further information
call 410-263-5909

## Lifted to Glory

**THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY IN WESTERN CHRISTIANITY, 200-1336.** By CAROLINE WALKER BYNUM. *Columbia University Press. 368 pp. $29.95.*

***Reviewed by* Robert L. Wilken**

IN CANTO FOURTEEN of the *Paradiso*, Dante writes,

---

ROBERT L. WILKEN *is the William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor of the History of Christianity at the University of Virginia and author, most recently, of* Remembering the Christian Past *(Eerdmans).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

When, glorified and sanctified, the flesh
is once again our dress, our persons shall
in being all complete, please all the more;
therefore, whatever light gratuitous
the Highest Good gives us will be *enhanced*—
the light that will allow us to see Him
that light will cause our vision to increase.

The vision of God, the end toward which all human life tends, will be more radiant, "enhanced," when the soul is rejoined with flesh "which the earth now covers up." Like coals that burn with a more intense glow than an immaterial flame, our bodies will bring the vision of God to perfection.

As in many passages, especially in the *Paradiso*, Dante's verse steps surefootedly through a complex theological idea with little hint to the casual reader of what lies behind his carefully chosen words. In this passage Dante sets out his own view on a large and perplexing question at the heart of Christian hope, whether the resurrected body will add anything to the vision of God enjoyed by the souls of the saints in the interim between death and resurrection. Dante believes it will.

In Dante's day the question had not been settled and his view is all the more interesting for that reason. Indeed ten years later, in the fall of 1331, Pope John XXII preached a series of sermons on the vision of God granted to the saints before the Resurrection. In these sermons the Pope said that the souls of the saints now rest "under the altar" (Revelation 6:9) contemplating Christ's humanity, but at the final judgment they will be raised above the altar to the more perfect joy of the *visio Dei*. With the resumption of flesh the saints will see God more fully.

The growing popularity of the doctrine of purgatory, and with it speculation on the state of the souls of the dead (good as well as bad), led many to think that the beatific vision could come to the saints before the final resurrection, i.e., whenever they were fully cleansed. Hence the Pope's sermons, according to several medieval chroniclers, "scandalized many," because he seemed to teach that the soul, when it is separated from the body, is incapable of seeing God "face to face." The full beatific vision is not *now* granted to the saints who rest from their labors.

The Pope found little support for his views, and after extended debate among theologians in Paris and Oxford he was forced to modify his opinions. A mediating position was reached that defended the idea of an immediate vision of God but allowed for a more perfect vision after the Resurrection. On his deathbed in 1334 Pope John reformulated (though not without equivocation) his teaching to say the "holy souls" see God face to face "as clearly as their condition as souls separated from their bodies allows." Two years later, however, his successor Benedict XII (who, as the distinguished theologian Cardinal Jacques Fournier, was one of his critics) issued the encyclical *Benedictus Deus* to assert that pure souls see the divine essence face to face before the Resurrection.

The debate over the *visio Dei* was not simply a dispute among scholastic theologians and bishops. It touched on the most personal and existential questions of human life and hope, for what really was at issue in these debates was whether the body was part of the definition of the self. The fourteenth-century controversy over the *visio Dei* was only a small part of a grand conversation that had been going on among Christian thinkers since Paul composed his triumphant, and enigmatic, conclusion to First Corinthians on the resurrected body. Paul asked, "With what kind of body do they come . . . ? What you sow is not the body which is to be but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. . . . It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body." What did St. Paul mean by these mysterious words? The metaphor of seed implies continuity, but that which sprouts from the earth is not the same as the seed that was buried in the earth. Did Paul really mean that one would be raised with the *same* body, or with a body that was as transformed as the seed is changed into a stalk of grain? Is the "spiritual body" that will be raised composed of the same stuff as the one that was buried?

These are the kind of questions discussed in wondrous detail in this learned, illuminating, and provocative book by Caroline Bynum, professor of history at Columbia University. Bynum is known to many readers from her earlier works on medieval spirituality, *Jesus as Mother* and *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*. But here she sets for herself a more ambitious task. Her new book, as the title suggests, is a series of studies of Christian thinking about the resurrected body in Christian thought in

**Moral Issues in Psychology**
October 20-21, 1995 • University of Dallas • Irving, Texas
***Presenters include:*** *Marvin Berkowitz, John Crosby, Richard Cross, Howard Kendler, William Kugelmann, Jeffrey Burke Satinover, Josef Seifert, Paul Vitz, and John White*
Sponsored by
IPP Institute for Personalist Psychology
*For more information please call:* 1-800-437-8368

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the patristic period and in the Western Middle Ages.

But this is not a conventional account of how one idea follows on another. Bynum does not simply report, she is very much in conversation with the texts—weighing, measuring, comparing, criticizing, and evaluating ideas and arguments, just as her sources were analyzing and evaluating thinkers who had gone before. At one point she cites Otto of Friesing's spirited comment on reading St. Augustine's discussion of seeing God in Heaven in Book 22 of the *City of God*. Augustine, says Otto, "says many things in a nonauthoritative manner."

BYNUM'S SOURCES are too varied and her reasoning too intricate to yield to easy summary, but one theme persists: in Christian tradition the self is by definition embodied. It is not soul, but soul *and* body that define the human person. Without the body the soul is not a person. Yet, as the debate over the *visio Dei* indicates, how one is to understand the relation of body and soul remains vexed.

The issues were posed early in Christian history, in part because pagan critics thought the whole idea of bodily resurrection absurd, in part because Christian hope required cogent exposition, and in part because it was hard to reconcile the various biblical statements about the life to come. The bodily resurrection of Jesus was of course a matter of biblical history, and the resurrection of the flesh a matter of faith. Yet in the Gospel of John the body of Jesus seems to pass through walls (20:26), and in Luke Jesus' disciples do not at first recognize him after the Resurrection (24:16). Texts such as 2 Corinthians 5 ("away from the body and at home with the Lord") seemed to suggest that one had to discard the body to be with God, whereas Job 19:26 says "in my *flesh* I shall see God" (Vulgate).

And there was of course that puzzling chapter in 1 Corinthians 15. Origin of Alexandria had interpreted Paul's words to mean that the body in Heaven was a spiritual and luminous body retaining the body's "form" but not its matter. Others thought this implied the resurrected body was not the body of the one who had died but another similar to it. St. Augustine was uneasy with the implications of the Pauline metaphor of seed; he preferred to speak of restoration of bodily wholeness, not transformation, and his metaphor was that of a reassembled statue. But whatever the metaphor (and there were many: flowering of a tree in spring, hatching of an egg, smelting of ore, etc.), the underlying question remained the same: What is it that insures not only continuity but identity between the person who died and the body that is raised? The easy answer would be soul, but that seemed contrary to the Church's teaching.

One cannot appreciate the force of this question until one begins to reflect, as the medievals did, on the specific questions that exercised Christian thinkers. The other day I found myself walking behind two small children being followed by their grandparents. The little girl, perhaps five years old, was rhythmically hopping across the mall, delighting in the quickness and flexibility of her body, oblivious to what was around; the grandparents were healthy able folk, not elderly, yet they moved deliberately, prudently looking down lest they slip. Later in the day I watched a very elderly man with a walker shuffle in to a hardware store, tiny step by tiny step, each made with a great act of will. Thinking medieval thoughts I wondered: Which body—that of the child, those of the middle-aged couple, or that of the man with the walker—will be raised in the resurrection? The medievals asked, Will there be differentiation by sex in heaven? Will we all be the same age? If so, what age? (Some said thirty!) Will limbs that were crippled or amputated be restored? What of those born with deformities? Will we have internal as well as external organs? Will a child that dies in infancy be raised as an adult? Will aborted fetuses rise?

Our bodies, as our experience shows, are always changing. The body of a ten year old is not the body of a twenty-five year old, and the body of a fifty year old is different from the body of someone who is eighty. The changes that we experience in our bodies through aging are largely negative. And there is of course the inevitability of death and the reality of decay and dissolution. If the body is always in flux how can it be raised to incorruption (meaning no further change) and eternal life? Conversely, how can human identity that is yoked to body survive the loss of bodily structure? The temptation was very great to define human beings by something that is immaterial and unchanging—namely, the soul. And in the late medieval period Christian thinkers, as reflected in the *visio Dei* controversy, came very close to suggesting that the soul is the guarantee of what we mean by self. Yet, as Bynum shows,

**TRADITIONAL ANGLICANS/EPISCOPALIANS**

Get *all* the news of interest to you—about the U.S. Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion at large as well as the Continuing Church internationally—from the publication that has been chronicling the traditional Anglican movement for 33 years—THE CHRISTIAN CHALLENGE. For the full picture of the Anglican world today—balanced and uncensored in an independent magazine published nine times yearly—send $22 for U.S. readers, $25 in Canada and $30 elsewhere, with your name and address, to:

The Only Worldwide Voice of
Traditional Anglicanism
Founded 1962
**1215 Independence Ave. S.E., Dept. F**
**Washington, DC 20003**

*Checks in U.S., British or Canadian currency are accepted, along with Visa or MasterCard charge orders.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# BOSTON UNIVERSITY STUDIES IN PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

Today we find that the professionalization of both philosophy and religious reflection has made these two disciplines virtually unavailable even to an educated public. This series recovers the public tradition of philosophical discourse that was a lively part of American intellectual life in the early years of this century. These books present readable essays by acknowledged authorities on critical human issues. The list of contributors to each volume is a veritable "Who's Who" of the greatest thinkers of our time, including Robert Bellah, Peter Berger, Sissela Bok, John B. Carman, James H. Cone, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Margaret R. Miles, Jürgen Moltmann, Bhikhu Parekh, Paul Ricoeur, Amelie Oksenberg Rorty, Huston Smith, Elie Wiesel, and Edith Wyschogrod, among others.

Volume Sixteen
**In Pursuit of Happiness**
Edited by Leroy S. Rouner
$29.95 cloth (November 1995 publication)

Volume Fifteen
**The Changing Face of Friendship**
Edited by Leroy S. Rouner
$29.95 cloth

Volume Fourteen
**Can Virtue Be Taught?**
Edited by Barbara Darling-Smith
$31.95 cloth • $10.95 paper

Volume Thirteen
**Selves, People, and Persons**
Edited by Leroy S. Rouner
$31.95 cloth

Volume Twelve
**On Community**
Edited by Leroy S. Rouner
$29.95 cloth

Volume Eleven
**Celebrating Peace**
Edited by Leroy S. Rouner
$31.95 cloth

Volume Ten
**On Freedom**
Edited by Leroy S. Rouner
$29.95 cloth

Volume Nine
**Human Rights and the World's Religions**
Edited by Leroy S. Rouner
$10.95 paper

Volume Eight
**Civil Religion and Political Theology**
Edited by Leroy S. Rouner
$29.95 cloth • $10.95 paper

Volume Six
**On Nature**
Edited by Leroy S. Rouner
$28.95 cloth

Volume Five
**Religious Pluralism**
Edited by Leroy S. Rouner
$31.95 cloth

Volume Four
**Foundations of Ethics**
Edited by Leroy S. Rouner
$29.95 cloth

Volume Three
**Meaning, Truth, and God**
Edited by Leroy S. Rouner
$10.95 paper

Volume Two
**Transcendence and the Sacred**
Edited by Alan M. Olson and Leroy S. Rouner
$29.95 cloth • $10.95 paper

At bookstores or call (800) 621-2736 (VISA or MasterCard accepted):
**University of Notre Dame Press**, Chicago Distribution Center, 11030 S. Langley, Chicago, IL 60628


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in spite of the philosophical problems presented by bodily resurrection, Christian thinkers insisted on the unity of body and soul. A complete human being was body as well as soul.

In late medieval theology, hagiography, poetry, and art, the body was seen as even more integral to the self. Again a passage from Dante illustrates the point. "One and the other choir seemed to me / so quick and keen to say 'Amen' that they / showed clearly how they longed for their dead bodies." The arresting phrase here is "longed for" (or desired) their dead bodies. The word "desire" comes from Augustine who had asked, "Why must the spirits of the departed be reunited with their bodies in the resurrection, if they can be admitted to the supreme beatitude without their bodies? . . . [For] some mysterious reason the soul possesses a kind of natural *desire* for managing the body. Because of this desire it is somehow hindered from going on with all its force to the highest heaven, so long as it is not joined with the body, for it is in managing the body that this desire is satisfied. . . . Only when the soul . . . again receives this body . . . will it have the perfect measure of its being."

Though this text was cited in theological handbooks, notably in the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, Christian thinkers had given little attention to it. But gradually the term "desire" began to find its way into discussions of the relation between the soul and the resurrected body. St. Bernard, for example, said that even though the body is "foul and fetid flesh," souls crave the body because only the body can bring full happiness and perfection. For Mechthild of Magdenburg (ca. 1282), a member of a semi-monastic German religious community, the body is the means of access to God. Though her body was a source of pain, she could not bear the thought of being free of her body. For it was in the body that she had come to know God: "The love of God lies on me. . . . And when I think that my body will be lost in death and I shall no longer be able to suffer for Jesus or to praise him, this is so heavy to me that I long, if it were possible, to live until Judgment Day. My love forces me to this."

Admittedly, the language of Mechthild of Magdeburg and other mystics and poets was bolder than that of the theologians, but they were working with ideas and language like Augustine's "desire" that were deeply rooted in Christian tradition. And that, finally, is Bynum's point. The Christian doctrine of the resurrection led Christian thinkers to make the body an essential element in defining the self.

OF COURSE all this talk about the body has a decidedly modern ring to it, as Bynum recognizes. We moderns, she writes, "find it difficult to think that any survival that really counts could entail loss of those markers the body bears: sex, race, personal appearance, and so forth." Consequently she argues that our modern conceptions of human persons are not as "modern" as we sometimes imagine; they are formed by hundreds of years of discussion of the resumption of bodies at the Resurrection. "The doctrine of the resurrection has been of enormous consequence in shaping assumptions we still hold concerning personhood and survival. Much about our current Western notions of the individual has taproots in medieval discussions of the ontological significance of the body." The legacy of Christian tradition is not, as some suppose, Gnosticism or shame over the body or otherworldliness, but the psychosomatic unity of the human being. Reading this book alongside of Charles Taylor's *Sources of the Self* (with its argument about the influence of Augustine's ideas of interiority in shaping modern ideas of the self), one wonders whether there is anything we moderns have learned about ourselves that does not have its roots in Christian (and Jewish) tradition.

No less significant are Bynum's acute observations about the popular view, associated with the New Testament scholar Oscar Cullman, that Christian thinkers abandoned biblical ideas of the person in favor of Greek notions that define the human being as soul. Oscar Cullman argued, with enormous success but spotty erudition, that in early Christian thinking a form of Greek dualism triumphed over the biblical understanding of the person. His facile theories are here laid to rest. The belief in the resurrection of the body insured that the body remained at the center of Christian thinking about the human person even in the face of formidable philosophical arguments to the contrary.

AT ONE POINT Bynum says that the promises of the bodily resurrection remained an "oxymoron." She speaks of the "incoherence" and "self-contradiction" of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. It is clear what she means: the doctrine of the resurrection of the body presented intractable philosophical problems. But I wonder whether putting things that way misses the distinctive feature of medieval thought. For medieval Christian thinkers, the resurrection of Jesus was a historical fact recorded in the Scriptures and a present reality in the consecrated bread and wine of the Eucharist. What had happened in history and what was known to be true in human experience might be a mystery but it was not incoherent or self-contradictory. Christian reasoning began with these "facts," as Etienne Gilson observed in his Gifford lectures on medieval philosophy: "Now it is a fact that between ourselves and the Greeks the Christian revelation has intervened, and has profoundly modified the conditions under which reason has to work." What is at work in the myriad of texts in this book is not so much the discussion of a set of ideas or images, but an effort to comprehend a reality given in revelation.

Perhaps this turns Bynum's book into an essay in theology and not simply a study in intellectual history. In her final paragraph she seems to take a step in that direction. There she invites the reader to focus not on the method she has used, nor the relevance of the ideas she has discussed, but "the notion of bodily resurrec-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion itself." She writes: "For however absurd it seems—and some of the greatest theologians of the Western tradition have grappled with that absurdity—it is a concept of sublime courage and optimism. It locates redemption where ultimate horror also resides—in pain, mutilation, death, and decay. . . . It was [the] stench and fragmentation they saw lifted to glory in resurrection." *The Resurrection of the Body* is a profound and rewarding book.

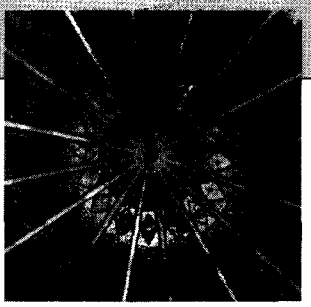
## BRIEFLY NOTED

**The Haunted Land: Facing Europe's Ghosts After Communism.** By Tina Rosenberg. *Random. 437 pp. $25.*

In the aftermath of the defeat of fascism and Japanese militarism in World War II, there was little controversy over the extensive programs of de-Nazification and demilitarization launched by the victorious Allies in Germany and Japan. But in the wake of the defeat of communism in what some regard as World War III—the Cold War—bitterly divisive arguments and intense political conflict have attended efforts to come to grips with the evils of the past forty years. Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Germany, the three countries surveyed in Tina Rosenberg's book, have each handled the issue differently. Poland drew a "thick line" in 1989 and, in effect, decided to let bygones be bygones; a former Communist apparatchik is now Poland's prime minister. The Czech "lustration" law forbids former secret police agents and high Communist officials from holding public sector jobs; the German "screening" process is intended to prevent former secret police informers from getting on the public payroll. Both countries' processes have been flawed by the lack of a comprehensive appeals mechanism, and neither has fully come to terms with the two basic facts about these records: not everything in them is true, and not everything true is in them. Still, the Czech Republic and Germany have at least made a serious effort to come to terms, publicly, with the evils of communism, and thus to put down some boundary markers for the democratic future. Tina Rosenberg's exploration of this tangled and murky business, while full of interesting detail, is ultimately unsatisfactory because Ms. Rosenberg (a MacArthur Foundation "genius" awardee) can't seem to grasp the moral perversity of the Communist project or the gravity of the damage that communism did to the moral ecology of east central Europe. (This is not, perhaps, surprising in an author who writes that Allende's Chile


REMEMBERING THE CHRISTIAN PAST

ROBERT L. WILKEN



"Although I have read most of these chapters in their earlier form as articles or essays, it was only when I read them together that I discerned their underlying thematic unity. As those who know his work would expect, that unity is grounded in Robert Wilken's thorough grasp of the texts and topics of early Christian history, both Eastern and Western; but it achieves coherence through his deep instincts for scholarly integrity, intellectual honesty, and theological soundness. My favorite among these pieces is probably the essay on the Trinity, which manages to make the familiar controversies and concerns fresh and vital. I hope that in this form Wilken's work will reach — and teach — a whole new set of readers."
—JAROSLAV PELIKAN

"No scholar of Christian antiquity surpasses Robert Wilken in making the literature of that period speak with direct relevance to the intellectual debates of our own time. This remarkable gift is deployed to great effect in these essays on religious pluralism, apologetics, the Trinity, virtue, and the passions."
—JOSEPH A. DINOIA, O.P.

"Robert Wilken's memory is stocked with perhaps unequaled knowledge of the ancient church and its intellectual and social milieu, and with a wide and quirky knowledge of the church and Western culture generally, more reminiscent of an earlier generation of English scholars than of the contemporary American academy. . . . He illuminates the contemporary situation of Christian intellect with such simplicity and ease that the result can even be called a good read."
—ROBERT W. JENSON

ISBN 0-8028-0880-8 • 189 pages • Paperback • $17.00

At your bookstore, or call 800-253-7521
FAX 616-459-6540

5565 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
255 JEFFERSON AVE. S.E. / GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49503


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

chose "to live up to its beautiful, nonrepressive socialist ideals," and who ends her book with the claim that anticommunism "resembles" communism "greatly" at times.) In short, it's the old story: Nazism was evil, pure and simple, while communism was a lovely ideal gone unhappily awry.

*—George Weigel*

**Nazi Germany: A New History.** By Klaus P. Fischer. *Continuum. 734 pp. $37.50.*

Generally speaking, histories of Nazi Germany tend to fall into one of two camps: either they are theory-driven disquisitions on the "underlying causes" of the phenomenon or they assume the voice and narrative drive of a contemporary newsreel, giving the reader that "we were there" feel—but also falling into faintly hackneyed melodrama. It is the remarkable achievement of Klaus Fischer's new history of Nazi Germany that he combines the skills of both camps, narrative power with theoretical shrewdness, without absorbing the faults of either outlook, providing in this fiftieth anniversary year of the end of World War II what will undoubtedly become the standard one-volume history of Nazi Germany for some time to come. If you are looking for carefully drawn miniature portraits of, say, the first member of the fledgling Nazi party or, later, of the architects of the Holocaust, you'll find it here. If you want a subtle analysis on how and why Nazism differs from the Communist subspecies of the totalitarian nightmare, here it is. Besides making for fascinating reading, Fischer's stereoscopic vision finally answers one of the great puzzles of Nazism: how could men of such limited talent and vapid ideas, some of whom were outright sociopaths, take over such a large and powerful country, and one that had, moreover, such a noble record of civilization? This will always remain a mystery, of course, but for Fischer the likeliest answer can be found in the ideological climate of late-nineteenth-century Europe: Hitler seemed plausible only because his brand of racism seemed plausible (and racism, Fischer makes clear, was the sum and substance of Nazism). And that ideology could seem plausible not just because anti-Semitism was such a "respectable" prejudice among the educated and peasant classes, but also because of the widespread acceptance of Charles Darwin's slogan "the survival of the fittest" and the eugenic consequences that so many of his successors drew from his theory of evolution. Not the least merit of this book is that it finally offers an intellectual genealogy of *Mein Kampf* that includes Darwin in the family tree.

*—Edward T. Oakes, S.J.*

**The Political Economy of Edmund Burke.** By Francis Canavan. *Fordham University Press. 185 pp. $30 cloth, $17.95 paper.*

Francis Canavan returns to his lifelong study of Edmund Burke with a monograph on Burke's political economy. While partisan writers have discovered in Burke the founder of a substantive "conservative" political philosophy, most contemporary intellectual historians have been less impressed with his thought. They have instead done Burke the "favor" of reading him as a disciple of Hume or Locke or Adam Smith. Canavan finds Burke more original than that and here emphasizes his divergence from such thinkers: Burke is no mere epigone. Thus, whereas Locke believed that the contract of civil society exists to defend property, Burke argues primarily for the importance of landed property. Whereas Smith found primogeniture "completely absurd" and observed that aristocratic landlords retard economic progress by favoring stable income over productive innovation, Burke decidedly prefers the old mixed agricultural order to modern commerce. Burke reaches these conclusions because his central concern is not material production but the political common good, which he believes is best secured through the rule of a moderate and well-contented aristocracy. Landed property is key, for unlike commercial riches, land is a form of wealth that carries with it "private" obligations to others (e.g., service as a justice of the peace), and thus semi-feudal aristocrats have a more virtuous habituation than do the elites of a modern commercial society. Commercial progress also increases the danger of tyranny, for unlike independent landed aristocrats, those whose wealth derives from monied capital are dependent on the changing economic policies of the central government. Commercial elites are natural courtiers and thus poor trustees of the common good. As ever, Canavan's work is thorough, such that even longtime students of Burke will find intelligent discussions of relatively understudied passages. For example, Canavan notes that Burke appears to anticipate distributist arguments in his *Sketch of the Negro Code* (1780), in which he advocates policies for the West Indies that would transform slaves into serfs and eventually into smallholders. Withal, the book should be of interest primarily to specialists.

*—Mark C. Henrie*

**Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft.** Edited by Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson. *Oxford University Press. 337 pp. $29.95.*

While not a definitive account of the place of religion in resolving domestic and international conflicts, *Religion, The Missing Dimension of Statecraft* represents a significant challenge to the conventional wisdom of a secularized world culture with a declining public role for religion. While Western scholars and public officials assumed that the importance of religion would decline over time in domestic and international politics, the reverse has been the case. The failure to anticipate the fall of the Shah derived directly from a failure to understand the importance of Islam in Iran, and the influence of religion in the collapse of Eastern European communism

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cannot be overstated. The major purpose of the essays collected by Johnston and Sampson is to call attention to the serious omission of religion in contemporary analysis. The bulk of the book is devoted to case studies of religion's role in resolving conflicts. Edward Luttwak analyzes the role of the Moral Re-Armament Movement in the reconciliation of the French and the Germans after World War II, and other essays focus on religion's role in political changes in Nicaragua, East Germany, the Philippines, and South Africa. These studies do not suggest a radical transformation in statecraft, but they do suggest that much more attention needs to be paid to religion if statecraft is to be effective.

*—Mark Amstutz*

**Jacques Maritain and the Jews.** Edited by Robert Royal. *University of Notre Dame Press. 286 pp. $15.*

Jacques Maritain, the distinguished Catholic philosopher and the French ambassador to the Vatican after World War II, played a preeminent role in the transformation of Catholic teaching about Jews, Judaism, and Catholic-Jewish relations. In this collection of seventeen essays, the evolution of Maritain's thought on "the Jewish Question" is critically examined. Time and again, Maritain publicly condemned the anti-Semitism of the Nazi era, calling the legislation of Vichy France "treason against the French spirit." In his 1939 work *A Christian Looks at the Jewish Question,* Maritain wrote scathingly of the anti-Semitic lies spreading in Europe and denounced as a forgery the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion.* The essays in the volume contain many new insights into Maritain's reflections on the Dreyfus affair, his friendships with Marc Chagall, Charles Péguy, Léon Bloy, and Henri Bergson, and the influence of his Jewish-born wife Raisa (who converted to Catholicism with Maritain in 1907). The essays highlight as well Maritain's central role in shaping a new Catholic understanding of the Jewish people. As early as 1947, Maritain urged the Vatican to remove reference to the Jews as a "deicide race" from Catholic theology and liturgy. Vittorio Possenti's essay, describing Maritain's work while ambassador that would do much to shape the deliberations of the Second Vatican Council on Jewish questions, makes an especially notable contribution, as do the essays by Leon Klenicki, John Hellman, and Michael Novak and the introduction by Robert Royal. The volume as a whole helps us understand the enduring relevance of Maritain's life and thought for Christian-Jewish relations and dialogue today.

*—David G. Dalin*

**The Dilemma of the Fetus: Fetal Research, Medical Progress, and Moral Politics.** By Steven Maynard-Moody. *St. Martin's. 235 pp. $23.95.*

The author is a professor of history with an interest in public policy. His chronology of the modern controversy over fetal research is all right, most of the *dramatis personae* are identified, and his account of medical matters, ancient and current, is often accurate. But some of the estimates he passes on as facts make a knowledgeable reader blink: e.g., that "for centuries, English law has identified birth as the moment human life begins"; that by 1971 there were up to 600,000 legal abortions annually in the U.S. ("thousands," he notes, are now performed each year); that there is a natural wastage rate of about 85 percent between conception and birth; that traditionally prenatal care was primarily for the mother, not the child; and that abortion is "uniquely controversial in the U.S." By his account, the major mischief-maker in this "morality play" has been the anti-abortion movement, whose members he describes as "absolutists" and "idealists," a "fervent," "strident" "faction" of "militant, Right-to-Life activists," possessed by a "rigid, deterministic view," dedicated to "guerilla war." They are "foes of research" who intrude "their ideology into policy." The researchers they attack, on the other hand, are described as "scientific" and "respected," anxious to produce "new knowledge," supporters of "reasoned, balanced attempts" to free medical science from politics. In a maneuver reversing the technology in *Zelig* and *Forrest Gump* that in-

POPE·JOHN·CENTER
FOR THE STUDY OF ETHICS IN HEALTH CARE

**Theologies of the Body:**
**Humanist and Christian**

Benedict Ashley, O.P.

The classic study of the Christian understanding of the human person as a bodily being, reprinted with a new introduction--
"one of those rare books which can truly be called a masterpiece...to which one can (and indeed must) return time and time again for instruction and enlightenment... a work of immense learning...massively erudite...a work of first-rank importance"-- William E. May

ISBN: 0-935372-15-7, Softcover, 770 pages, $25.95

186 Forbes Road, Braintree Massachusetts 02184-2612
tel 617-848-6965 • fax 617-849-1309

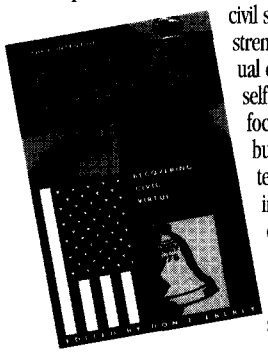
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Can We Recover Character In America

THE CONTENT OF AMERICA'S CHARACTER assesses the state of character—the combination of traits like honesty, compassion, courage and perseverance—in America and provides paths for reversing the trends of moral indifference that challenge the viability of our society.

*Edited by* DON EBERLY

Writing from varied political perspectives, the contributors to this volume share the same basic premise: we must revitalize institutions of civil society, we must strengthen individual capacity for self-government by focusing on building character, and we must improve our ethical fitness.



**Now Only $24.95**

**ISBN# 1-56833-055-3**

"This is a much needed book, and an important resource for educators, social workers, clergy, parents and many others. Each of the book's contributors writes out of the conviction that democracy is not viable without a solid moral foundation.

The good news is that there are programs described in this book, either being tested or already in place, that promise solid results."

**George Gallup, Jr. Chairman**
*The Gallup International Institute*

CONTRIBUTING SCHOLARS:
DON E. EBERLY, B. DAVID BROOKS, WILLIAM J. BROWN, ERIC E. EBELING, RANDOLPH FEEZELL, CHARLES L. GLENN, CHARLES E. GREENAWALT, II, RICHARD C. HARWOOD, EARL HESS, WADE F. HORN, CHARLES R. KESLER, THOMAS LICKONA, WILLIAM J. MOLONEY, JOHN E. MURRAY, JR., MICHAEL NOVAK, MARVIN OLASKY, KEITH J. PAVLISCHEK, ROBERT ROYAL, ARVIND SINGHAL, CHRISTINA HOFF SOMMERS, JAMES Q. WILSON.

A PUBLICATION OF
THE CIVIL SOCIETY PROJECT & MADISON BOOKS
4720 Boston Way, Lanham, MD 20706

**Order by Phone:**
**1-800-462-6420**
**FAX 301-459-2118**

serted Woody Allen and Tom Hanks into various well-known historic film clips, the author has eliminated any trace of activist groups anxious to legitimate and protect abortion: NARAL, Planned Parenthood, NOW, and the NCC. Supporting actors remain the Congress, whose right-to-life members are thoughtlessly responsive to their constituency, and a public whose grasp of these scientific issues is more visceral than rational. Maynard-Moody's treatment of the moral points at issue is remarkable. In each dispute he sets forth two simplistic and partisan views: for instance, that human life begins with conception, or that it begins with birth (strangely, he omits the view that it begins with choice). He then typically sets both polar views aside, not for any principled reason but because neither can command a consensus. He then offers a "middle ground": for instance, that human life begins with viability. Absent any rational justification for this, he admits "there are no unambiguous developmental milestones that separate fetal life from nonlife" (clearly unaware that this is the pro-life view). In the absence of any social consensus, he believes that, rather than argue or vote, we should simply defer to what doctors feel and present laws imply: for instance, that the viable fetus is entitled to human dignity (provided, of course, that it is not an "unwanted" fetus). The book never gets beyond this level of moral discourse.

*—Ishmael Law*

**THE SECRET SIX.** By EDWARD J. RENEHAN. *Crown. 320 pp. $25.*

As the analogy between slavery and abortion becomes increasingly clear, John Brown's misguided attempts to force an end to slavery in Kansas and at Harpers Ferry have attracted growing interest from scholars and activists alike. The zeal of Brown to end slavery through violence is matched today by the zeal of a few to end abortion through violence. And the futility and error of this violence is made clear in *The Secret Six*—an account of the group of Northern patricians (including Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Samuel Howe, and Theodore Parker) who conspired with Brown before the Harpers Ferry raid. Edward Renehan shows the eloquence of these men in their speeches and writings against slavery. And he shows as well the frustration at the slow pace of abolition that led at last to violence. Despite the apparently bleak prospects at the time, however, slavery would be dead only ten years later (albeit, after even greater violence). Anti-slavery violence before the Civil War did little to advance abolition and much to retard it. Those disheartened by abortion today may find hope in this, and may look to Brown and the Secret Six in order to avoid their mistakes.

*—Matthew S. Monnig*

**REMEMBERING THE CHRISTIAN PAST.** By ROBERT L. WILKEN. *Eerdmans. 180 pp. $16.99 paper.*

Of the putting together of books of essays there is certainly no end, but seldom is the result a coherent book in its own right. *Remembering the Christian Past* is an instance of that happy exception, offering eight chapters that elaborate the question posed in Wilken's presidential address to the American Academy of Religion, "Who Will Speak *for* the Religious Traditions?" Wilken, professor of church history at the University of Virginia and frequent contributor to this journal, persuasively and winsomely makes the case that authentic religion is in very large part a matter of remembering. That against academic theology's preoccupation with "critical studies" and ersatz "creativity." His reconstruction of how the Church arrived at the orthodox dogma of the Trinity ("No Solitary God") is more than worth the price of the book, but, then, so is almost every other chapter in this engagingly instructive collection.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

**The Jefferson Bible: The Life and Morals of Jesus Christ.** Introduction by Douglas E. Lurton. *Henry Holt. 123 pp. $13.95.*

**Lincoln's Devotional.** Introduction by Carl Sandburg. *Henry Holt. 191 pp. $13.95.*

New editions of two important documents of American religious history. *The Jefferson Bible* is our third president's theologically infelicitous attempt to rewrite the Gospels to conform to his own brand of ethical humanism. Fortunately, his Declaration of Independence can be interpreted as supporting more substantive truths. *Lincoln's Devotional* is a collection of Bible readings and inspirational poetry originally published in 1852 under the title *The Believer's Daily Treasure.* Lincoln is known to have been a diligent reader of this little book, and one finds its echo in his speeches and writings.

**Being Elsewhere.** By John P. Sisk. *Eastern Washington University Press. 154 pp. $12.50 paper.*

In this marvelous collection of fourteen autobiographical essays—not so much about the effects of getting to other places as about the effect of being in other places—John Sisk sketches the travels he has undertaken in his long life: to the golf courses of the nouveau riche as a young caddy in the roaring twenties, to the sudden boom towns serving the laborers building the Grand Coulee Dam in the thirties, to the airforce bases of World War II, to South America, to Europe, to everywhere and anywhere, and back at last to home. But Sisk's travels are as much travels of the mind as travels of the body. Through each of the essays runs a book, or an idea, or a theory; through each of the essays runs the story of a parallel journey in thinking. And Sisk's touch as one of our finest essayists is revealed by the fact that these parallel journeys of the mind are always illuminated by, and in turn illuminate, the experience of being elsewhere.

**Sexuality and Authority in the Catholic Church.** By Monica Migliorino Miller. *University of Scranton Press. 286 pp. $45.*

A book is not a good book because it might have been a great book; we typically award no bonuses for wasted potential. But Monica Miller's *Sexuality and Authority* is a surprisingly good book—surprisingly, for this first scholarly work by a part-time lecturer at Marquette University emerges overpriced and without ballyhoo from a small academic press. Beginning with the observation that authority is not extrinsic organizational force, and denying the feminist assertion that Christ (by virtue of His gender) only partially reveals redemption, Dr. Miller reads her patristic sources carefully and claims that the model of the Church as bride and mother allows us to reserve priestly authority for men without denying authority to women. *Sexuality and Authority* reads more like a doctoral dissertation than a book; it is poorly proofread, poorly designed, and poorly printed; it is a little timid and a little over-organized, the way first books often are. All of which is a shame, for a competent editor, leading an author through her first book, ought to have fixed these problems. Monica Miller is doing important work and deserves to be read anyway.

**Corrective Love.** By Thomas C. Oden. *Concordia. 224 pp. $12.99 paper.*

In an age in which permissiveness is often taken as the most truly humane and Christian of attitudes, Thomas C. Oden—fresh from the controversies that raged around his apologia for the traditional study of orthodox theology in *Requiem: A Lament in Three Movements*—has now written a book to assert the necessity for a loving but nonetheless real discipline in Christian churches. "Corrective discipline" is intrinsic to the well-being of churches, the United Methodist Oden writes, for "the work of gentle correction is

Concerned Educators, Catechists and Parents...

Come to the Water

**Total Catholic Education Conference**
**November 3 & 4, 1995**
**Secretariat for Education**
**Diocese of Pittsburgh**
**David L. Lawrence Convention Center**
**Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**
**Cardinal Pio Laghi, *Friday Keynote***
**Charles Colson, *Saturday Keynote***

| | |
|---|---|
| Carol Augustine | Sean Innerst |
| Greer Gordon | Rev. M. Eric Diskin |
| Robert McCarty | James Stenson |
| Rev. Alfred McBride | Rev. Augustine DiNoia |
| Jim Fox | Veronica Morgan-Lee |
| Patrick Madrid | Peter Kreeft |
| Rev. Joseph Champlin | Barbara Morgan |
| Paul Lauer | Ronda Chervin |
| Rev. Mark Gruber | Neil Parent |
| Sr. Frances Trampiets | Rev. Michael Scanlan |
| Sr. Elizabeth Thoman | Ginny Thornburgh |
| William Kirk Kilpatrick | Mary Ann Aheam |
| Russell Shaw | Robert George |
| Sr. Jeanette Bussen | Rev. Kris D. Stubna |
| Sr. Clare Fitzgerald | John Haas |
| Susan Muto | Paul Vitz |
| Sr. Margaret Carney | Patrick Malloy |
| Dr. Skipp Sanders | Msgr. Charles Murphy |
| Scott & Kim Hahn | George Sim Johnston |

For more information write to:
Total Catholic Education Conference,
Diocese of Pittsburgh, 48 South 14th Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15203

**Call 412-481-7716 today!**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WHAT DOES
PHILOSOPHY
HAVE TO DO WITH
FAITH

Some say nothing at all.

Others say they are natural enemies. In the MA philosophy program at Franciscan University of Steubenville, philosophy and faith enrich each other.

Our one-year program places a special emphasis on the philosophy of the human person. You will study not only Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, and St. Thomas, but also recent personalist thinkers such as John Henry Newman, Max Scheler, Dietrich von Hildebrand, and Pope John Paul II.

You may come to our MA philosophy program simply to reflect on the ultimate questions of human existence. Or, like many of our graduates, you can go on to advanced studies in literature, law, history, or theology, and find yourself uniquely equipped to deal with the fundamental questions of these disciplines. This program is also an ideal stepping stone to a PhD.

Learn to integrate faith and philosophy with an MA in philosophy at Franciscan University. Call our Admissions Office today.

Franciscan University of Steubenville ©
University Boulevard, Steubenville, Ohio 43952-6701
1-800-783-6220
FT 95/96

closely related to the epitome of Christian community: the eucharistic Sacrament of reconciliation." Neither the laity nor the clergy are unilaterally responsible for this discipline, and the common pattern of leaving discipline solely in the hands of a hyper-permissive clergy has contributed to the crises of heretical theology and declining membership in mainline American churches. What we need instead, Oden reminds us, is a laity and a clergy endowed not with police powers by the State but with real ecclesiastical powers of discipline that may be used—with loving forgiveness—to bring erring members to repentance and renewed communion with the body of the church.

**GOD WITHOUT BEING.** By JEAN-LUC MARION. *University of Chicago Press. 258 pp. $13.95 paper.*

Welcome the paperback of a book that has been stirring thoughtful discussion in theological and philosophical circles. Marion, who teaches philosophy at the University of Paris, does battle against the "idolatry" of trying to fit God into the philosophical concept of Being. Along the way he both draws from and criticizes Heidegger in particular. For readers not primarily interested in these philosophical disputes, the payoff comes when Marion turns his argument toward the Eucharist, making a surprising and persuasive case that the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation is the surest guard against idolatry in worship. A truly remarkable work.

**GERMAN ESSAYS ON RELIGION.** Edited By EDWARD T. OAKES, S.J. *Continuum. 256 pp. $29.50 cloth, $14.95 paper.*

For better or for worse, much contemporary writing about religion derives from and must continue to return to the extraordinary body of work done in modern times by writers in German. From Kant to Wittgenstein, Marx to Rosenzweig, Schleiermacher to von Balthasar,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Goethe to Freud, Fichte to Barth, German writers have set the terms and questions that any thought deserving the title "modern" must confront. In this anthology, Edward Oakes collects representative passages on religion from twenty-two authors (some defenders of religion and some opponents) from the eighteenth to the twentieth century. Recent scholarship has suggested that Heidegger, equally with the other phenomenologists, maintained a fascination with religion, and the absence of any reading from Heidegger—a major influence on Barth and Bultmann alike (both of whom are included)—suppresses one important voice in modern thought. But the anthology in general takes a distinguished place in Continuum's German Library as a fine introduction to an influential set of German writers. And it reminds us of the seriousness with which these writers took religion and the seriousness with which we must take them.

## Living Under Authority

Chinese astronomers Hi and Ho were put to death
for failing to foretell the solar eclipse
of 2169 B.C. I myself was taken by surprise
in 1979. A sifting of light pulled me away

from my baby's morning nap and onto the edge
of the porch. A line in the west, the leading edge
of shadow dividing light and darkness, swept toward me,
then over me. I was in darkness. Silent stars

stepped forward. The hubbub of birds fell silent
for a moment of minutes. Then from the west, again,
fast-forward dawn, a broom held by hands in a heaven,
shaking birds from branches and brushing out those stars.

This morning fifteen years later, my children
ready for the school bus tell me an almost total eclipse
is coming. (Oh, Hi and Ho, had you not children in school?)
They go. I turn on the television, expecting

news to break into programming, but it does not.
So, I go outside. While I wait, I weed.
A patch of sky west of the sun
turns from white to cornflower. For an hour

morning is a 40 watt bulb. Birds hop slower,
but keep peeping. For some seconds the air chills.
Then it warms. A rooster somewhere
crows, "Only this? Only this?"

I was ready to glimpse hidden stars, to feel light
and darkness clearly defined. I was prepared
today to be startled. I rise from something
less than I'd planned on. Nevertheless, I'm not killed

for being surprised.

**Suzanne Lawrence**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

## That They May Be One

It was, if I recall, Evelyn Waugh who wrote about a Catholic gentleman whose idea of a perfect world was one in which he would have a new papal bull to read at breakfast every day. This year had some wags speaking about their membership in the Encyclical of the Month Club. Actually, there were only two, but they came in rapid order: *Evangelium Vitae* (The Gospel of Life) and *Ut Unum Sint* (That They May Be One). This issue includes extended comments on the former. *Ut Unum Sint*, issued May 30, is on ecumenism and, since Christian unity is an abiding concern of this journal, it will no doubt be coming in for further examination in the months and years ahead.

The initial response to *Ut Unum Sint* has been almost uniformly favorable. In the general media, it did not receive the major attention accorded *Evangelium Vitae*, and that is no doubt because editors view ecumenism as an internal Christian question with slight bearing on the public realm. While not surprising, that is a very big mistake. In a world increasingly marked by resurgent religion, notably Christianity and Islam, the ecumenical reconfiguration of 1.8 billion Christians is a matter of enormous world-historical import. Of course *Ut Unum Sint* does not *effect* such a reconfiguration, but it does irrevocably commit the Catholic Church, with more than a billion members, to that goal.

The forcefulness with which that commitment is expressed is what strikes many as the most dramatic feature of the encyclical. It does not add anything doctrinally substantive to the teaching of the Second Vatican Council on the relationship of the Catholic Church to other Christians, but it spells out the ecumenical implications, both theological and strategic, and underscores in an unprecedented manner the urgency with which the Catholic Church views the search for Christian unity.

After the Council, there was much talk about the Catholic Church "joining" the ecumenical movement that dates from the 1910 Edinburgh Missionary Conference and is today represented by the World Council of Churches (WCC). Because of the asymmetry of size and ecclesiological self-understandings, there was never a possibility of the Catholic Church simply joining the WCC as another church among the churches. *Ut Unum Sint* formally clarifies what most observers—Protestant, Orthodox, and Catholic—have recognized to be the case in the last several decades, namely, that since the Council the Catholic Church has reconstituted the ecumenical movement. In some respects, the Catholic Church today *is* the ecumenical movement; at the very least it is the spiritual and institutional center of the movement toward Christian unity in our time.

### *The Twain Shall Meet*

The encyclical reflects the urgency, indeed the passion, of this pope for the restoration of full communion between East and West that was broken in 1054. He has repeatedly spoken of the second millennium as the millennium of Christian divisions, and the third millennium as, please God, the millennium of Christian unity. Of course the encyclical also has very much in mind the divisions that issued from the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century, but with respect to the Orthodox Church of the East there is a sense of imminent reconciliation. Speaking of East and West, the document says the Church must "again breathe with both lungs." In recent years there have been extraordinary steps toward reconciliation with the Orthodox, but the Pope clearly hopes that full communion might be restored in his pontificate, or at least that he will witness a mutual and irrevocable commitment to the achievement of that goal, sooner rather than later.

Certainly, *Ut Unum Sint* irrevocably commits the Catholic Church. Bartholomew of Constantinople, the Ecumenical Patriarch, met with John Paul II in Rome last June, and, like his immediate predecessors, declared his devotion to the goal of full communion. He and others, however, are under



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pressure from some Orthodox leaders to go slow. Indeed some Orthodox, such as the very influential monks of Mount Athos, are clearly alarmed by what they view as a possible sell-out of Orthodoxy to its traditional enemy, Rome. In view of centuries of acrimony and keenly remembered grievances on the part of the East, some believe that any dramatic step toward reconciliation with Rome could lead to further conflicts, and even schism, within Orthodoxy.

If, as is commonly said, Rome thinks in terms of centuries, the consciousness of many Orthodox is virtually timeless. For as long as memory serves, the Orthodox have talked about a forthcoming Pan-Orthodox Council that would bring together all the jurisdictions of the East. The late Alexander Schmemann, one of the most influential Orthodox theologians of this century, wryly observed that a Pan-Orthodox Council is an eschatological concept. Nonetheless, *Ut Unum Sint* demonstrates that the Catholic Church is undaunted, and will do all it can to effect a reconciliation that it believes is made both possible and imperative by the revealed truth that Orthodox and Catholics hold in common.

This determination is strikingly evident in the way the encyclical puts on the table the question of the exercise of the papal ministry. John Paul forcefully makes the point that the Petrine ministry, instituted by Christ, rightly belongs to all Christians. He acknowledges that this ministry, which was given to serve Christian unity, has at times been a cause of division. He asks all Christians to help him reflect on how the successor of Peter might exercise this ministry in a different way, and he points to the first millennium of the undivided Church as a possible source of models that might be newly relevant today.

### *Turning to the West*

With respect to the divisions in the West, the encyclical acknowledges that great progress has been made over the last three decades in theological dialogues with Protestant communions, especially with Lutherans and Anglicans. Yet much work is needed "before a true consensus of faith can be achieved." Five questions are mentioned that require fuller study: 1) The relationship between Scripture and Sacred Tradition; 2) The Eucharist as Real Presence and sacrifice; 3) The sacrament of Ordination and apostolic ministry; 4) The Magisterium or teaching authority in the Church; and 5) Mary as Mother of God and Icon of the Church. (The ordination of women, which has in recent years become a major obstacle to unity, is not specifically mentioned but is obviously included in the third question listed.)

Some may be discouraged by that list, since these are the questions disputed between Protestants and Catholics for nearly five hundred years. It is very much worth noting, however, that what many Protestants have claimed is *the* question dividing Rome and the Reformation traditions—justification by faith alone—is not on the list. It is confidently expected that in 1997 Rome and the Lutheran World Federation will adopt a common statement on justification, affirming that differences on this question are not church-dividing. Other Protestants for whom faith alone (*sola fide*) is the critical sticking point may well follow the Lutheran lead. Some Protestants declared justification by faith alone the *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae* — the article by which the Church stands or falls. With the dispute over that article resolved, common theological work can turn to questions about what it means for the Church to be fully and rightly ordered.

There is no denying that recent years have witnessed diminished expectations of "ecclesial reconciliation" between Rome and the Reformation traditions. Some always thought those expectations were unwarranted, but they were very real nonetheless. Precisely in a time of diminished ecumenical expectations, when it is difficult to see the way toward the restoration of full communion, there is a need for increased ecumenical devotion. That is the message of *Ut Unum Sint*. Looking to the East, the encyclical evinces a sense of the imminent possibility of full communion; looking to the West, it pledges unremitting determination to sustain and increase ecumenical engagement. As the encyclical emphasizes, ecumenism is the task of bringing to fulfillment the communion that already exists among all Christians. That task, John Paul II repeatedly underscores, is not optional for the Church; it is not an "appendix" to Christian life and mission. It belongs "essentially" and "irrevocably" to faith's response to the One who prayed "that they may all be one." (The full text of *Ut Unum Sint* is available for $2.95 from the St. Paul Book and Media Center, 150 E. 52nd Street, New York, NY 10022. Telephone: (212) 754-1110.)

FT

## Fighting the New York-Hollywood Axis

Of course Don Wildemon, William Bennett, and Bill Donohue of the Catholic League are doing a gutsy thing in protesting the unremitting stream of sleaze that is popular culture. One can even muster a grudging respect for Senator Robert Dole's protest, while recognizing the political opportunism that motors it. T. S. Eliot notwithstanding, society frequently does depend upon people doing the right thing for the wrong reason. Especially politicians.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

For people like Bennett and Donohue, who have an intellectual reputation to protect, there is a price to be paid in being depicted as censorious prudes who are the enemies of "artistic creativity." In confrontations with such as the executives of Time Warner, Bennett plays the role of old Joe Welch in the Army-McCarthy hearings of 1954: "Sir, have you no shame?" The answer, of course, is that many of them don't, while others think they are doing a morally good thing. One must believe that some of them really do think that. Gangsta' rap may be ugly, they say, but it shows the world as it really is, and, anyway, testing the limits of the First Amendment is always a public service.

A while back the paper reported that the Calvin Klein advertising people got an award for their groundbreaking creativity in splashing advertisements of near-naked men and women on buses and billboards around the country. In some advertising circles, they are referred to as the Calvin Slime ads, but there is little doubt that the folk responsible for them really do take pride in their courage, and would if they could depict explicit sexual acts of polymorphous perversity. Who knows, perhaps soon they will do just that, breaking yet newer ground in the rubble of what are quaintly called civilizational standards. At the risk of sounding conspiratorial, one cannot entirely discount those who boast of being part of a vast conspiracy to liberate society from the stifling mores of the past.

The conspiracy is candidly displayed in Patricia Morrissroe's new biography of Robert Mapplethorpe. The late and much celebrated photographer who died of AIDS routinely referred to his exhibitions as "the sex pictures," and took great delight in insinuating pornography into what is called mainstream art. In the Cincinnati obscenity trial over the exhibition of his photographs (a bullwhip up the anus, a man urinating into another's mouth, and other such pleasantries), internationally recognized authorities declared Mapplethorpe's work to be of great artistic merit, while, according to Morrissroe, they sniggered behind the scenes over how they were outfoxing the local legal rubes who thought they could build a prosecution on, ha ha, community standards. The standards of the philistines don't stand a chance up against the art of the self-certified creative community. Morrissroe reports that Mapplethorpe's most intense pleasure was in watching others eat his excrement. He and his allies in the arts establishment were delighted to implicate the public in his games, and had the added satisfaction of having taxpayers pay for it.

Critics have pointed out that the newspapers that editorially defend porno-art dare not print pictures of what they are defending. An editor at a local paper says this is a cheap shot, since there are many things they might defend others exhibiting that they would not exhibit themselves. There's a measure of truth in that. The *New York Times*, say, can defend the legal right of pornographers to exhibit their products without taking on any obligation to print the stuff in its pages. But it is a different matter when the *Times* champions Mapplethorpe and other "controversial" projects as art worthy of respect. Surely the editors should not hesitate to show their readers what they think is art deserving of public support. Any doubt about the media's mendacity is removed by the fact that they do show their readers and viewers uncontroversial and even lovely works of the artists in question. Thus during the Mapplethorpe controversies the *Times* regularly published his charming photographs of orchids and lilies, inviting its readers to join in its indignation against the Yahoos who would censure such innocent creativity. As Big Daddy says in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, "Mendacity. I'm surrounded by mendacity."

### *In the Absence of Outrage*

So what got us started on this rant? Blame Hilton Kramer, editor of that excellent journal, the *New Criterion*, who the other day was carrying on in high style about the Mapplethorpe biography. And blame Bill Donohue of the Catholic League, who regularly alerts us to the latest outrages, sending along videos, "Just in case you think I'm exaggerating." And some evenings we watch them, which is not the best thing to do before going to bed. There are the videos, for instance, of the CBS program *Picket Fences*. Producer David Kelley sets the series in a town called, fittingly enough, Rome, and the running story line is the absurdity of all things Catholic. Last season Father Barrett (played by Roy Dotrice) was exposed as a foot fetishist. The teenage boys in the parish allowed as how it was no big deal, since everybody needs a masturbation fantasy. In a later episode Father betrays the seal of the confessional, and in the season's finale he was gunned down in the confessional with an Uzi. Then there was the boy who received the stigmata, but the stuffy prelates in Rome declared he was faking it—thus demonstrating simultaneously that Catholics are weird and that their narrow-minded church does its best to take the fun out of the weirdness.

There is something campishly outrageous about *Picket Fences*, and we have a hard time getting as worked up about it as much as Dr. Donohue thinks we should. Another video he sends along is something different. It is an episode of *The Wright Verdicts*, also on CBS (since cancelled), in which Tom Conti plays Wright, a lawyer who, assisted by two female assistants, one busty and the other boxy, pins the murder of a malicious bishop on a sanctimonious middle-aged priest who is guilty of, among other things, pedophilia. With clipboard in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hand as the program proceeds, one checks off every anti-Catholic cliché in the book. The program is obviously intended to be venomous, and it is, although the effect of the venom is diluted by an obviousness and ineptitude that is hard to believe.

The setting is the "archdiocese" of New York, but the producers apparently got cold feet, so instead of having a cardinal archbishop who might come dangerously close to suggesting John O'Connor, the archdiocese is headed by a corrupt and mean-spirited old bishop who is taking kickbacks from contractors, living high on the hog, breaking the seal of the confessional, bullying a young gay priest (who, we are reassured, is keeping his vows), and doing other things that a bishop certainly should not do. When the bishop gets thrown to his death from a balcony, suspicion falls upon a radical feminist nun who has been harassing the bishop, disrupting his services, and otherwise making herself unpleasant in the name of women's rights. She is, of course, the heroine of the story, and our hero lawyer proves her innocence in the inevitable Perry Mason-like courtroom denouement.

Everything is out of whack in this episode. The clerical dress, the rituals depicted, the nomenclature used—all reflect an ignorance of things Catholic. But never mind. You don't have to know anything about Catholicism to mock Catholics. It is enough to know that it is an oppressive, hypocritical, and pervasively evil system whose only slight possibility of redemption rests with those who, like our feminist nun, are in rebellion against it. At the end, the nun tells the lawyer's tough, boxy assistant, who is bitterly alienated from the church, that she should come back in to help the nun and like-minded rebels take back the church that really belongs to them.

Why, asks Dr. Donohue, don't Catholics and other decent folk rise up in massive outrage? A good question. Actually, Donohue has done a remarkable job in the last couple of years, making the Catholic League a potent instrument of protest along the lines of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith. But not nearly that potent. Flurries of letters are generated, pointing out that the networks would not dare treat Jews, blacks, or gays the way they treat Catholics. True enough, of course. But the unruffled response of the media is that Catholics are not a certified victim group. Certified victims are those whom you treat nicely. The fact that the media defames Catholics with impunity proves that they are not victims. To be sure, it is more complicated than that. Jews have the Holocaust. Blacks have slavery and segregation. Gays have a putatively homophobic society. All Catholics got is claimed mistreatment by a media elite. Since those who are the elite are certain in their own minds that they are anti-elitist and therefore, by definition, cannot victimize anyone, the Catholic claim to victimization is manifestly spurious.

While Catholics and Catholicism are sometimes slandered, traduced, and reviled, Catholics in fact do not constitute a victim class in American society. Nor should they claim to be that. To declare oneself a victim is to hand over one's identity and freedom of initiative to the presumed victimizer. More thoughtful blacks have in recent years come to understand the self-defeating consequences of exploiting victimhood. Unlike the NAACP or ADL, the Catholic League protests not because Catholics are real or potential victims but because all of us are reduced by a popular culture that is dishonest, meretricious, and low.

### *The Sensitivity Patrols*

Of course this is not just a Catholic thing. The sensitivity patrols are on 'round-the-clock duty, scrutinizing every nook, corner, and closet of the culture, but turn a blind eye when it comes to beating up on religion. Not all religion, mind you. It is hard to imagine a television episode based on a United Methodist bishop tossed to her death from her suburban back porch. Mainline Protestantism escapes bashing because it is deemed to be neither interesting nor dangerous. (Although recent goings on in the Episcopal Church suggest its bishops may be trying out for a prime time series.) Evangelical Protestants, especially those of a more fundamentalist hue, catch a producer's eye from time to time. Not because they are thought to be especially interesting; everyone knows that they are, as a *Washington Post* writer put it, poor, uneducated, and easily led. Elmer Gantry still has a certain cachet, but that's been done so often. The other interesting thing is the snake-handling bit, but it seems few evangelicals go in for that nowadays. If they are not particularly interesting, however, they are dangerous, as witness "the religious right" and all that.

The Catholic Church, on the other hand, is both interesting and dangerous. They got all those wonderfully spooky things: candles, confessionals, masses, exorcisms, saints, nuns, monks, and a pope who claims to speak infallibly about something called absolute truth. This is a hoot. Or, as it is more delicately put, Catholicism is "colorful." But it is scary, too. It's been around all these centuries, pulling the strings of world conspiracy, toppling governments, stomping out revolutions, and, most recently, overthrowing communism and thus putting an end, at least for the time being, to the name of our dream, which is socialism. Then there is the sex thing, which is life itself. Who appointed the Catholic Church to be chaperone at the party? Celibate, withered old men speak about right and wrong and, by some secret alchemy, one of them (a Pole yet!) attracts devoted crowds larger than have ever been seen in the history of the world. And they are overwhelmingly young people. Could this be the future? The thought is intolerable.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

### *Near Escapes*

The experts who aver under oath that Mapplethorpe is high art in the tradition of Michelangelo, the confused producers of such as *The Wright Verdicts,* the writers in the *New Republic* and the *Nation* who declare that the Christian Coalition is a proto-fascist threat—all are driven by fear and loathing. Many of them are acting out what might be called the near-escape syndrome. They are, or in some cases pretend to be, people who were once caught in the clutches of fundamentalist religion. They believe their escape was a narrow one, and letting up on their hostility for even a moment might lead to their succumbing again. In fact, of course, many of them never were fundamentalists or Catholics, or even Christians for that matter, but they think they know the face of the enemy. Evangelicals lynch colored folk and Catholics burn heretics at the stake, don't they? Alright, so they haven't done that for a long time, but they're still against abortion, aren't they? Same thing.

Many Catholics and some evangelicals (evangelicals do not feel as culturally secure) wear the hostility of the New York-Hollywood axis as a badge of honor. That's one reason Dr. Donohue has such a hard time marshalling Catholic indignation. They feel more complimented than offended when, for instance, ACT-UP invades St. Patrick's Cathedral and desecrates the Mass. At least the enemy recognizes its enemy. While there is a little to be said for such an attitude, it easily slips into smugness and self-satisfaction. Donohue is right. Anti-Catholic and anti-Christian bigotry must be protested not because it cripples the Christian cause but because it is bigotry. The ignorance, hatred, perversity, and violence cultivated by the people who run the industries that run much of our popular culture are evils that coarsen our common life, encourage moral delinquency, and bring innumerable individuals to ruin. Plus it has to be doing something terrible to the souls of the people who produce and peddle this stuff. Those are all reasons enough to protest.

Care is needed to make sure that protests such as those of the Catholic League, or Don Wildemon's boycotting of advertisers, or Bill Bennett's chiding of media executives are not seen as self-serving. It is a mistake to depict such protests in the model of the Anti-Defamation League. ADL lives off the perception, albeit a mistaken perception, that Jews are an imperiled minority in an essentially hostile culture. That is a not very believable assumption on the part of the ADL, and it is thoroughly implausible in the case of Catholics, evangelical Protestants, and the conservative political movement. The latter three are all part not of an imperiled minority but of an ascendant majority. From that perspective of confidence, we should devote at least as much attention to understanding as to protesting the New York-Hollywood axis and its industry of cultural devastation.

### *Art and Alienation*

Movie critic Michael Medved has paid careful attention to these questions, and argues persuasively that it is a mistake to think that the entertainment moguls are merely interested in making money. They are driven by ideas and prejudices more than by profits, Medved contends. He cites a long list of egregiously offensive productions that have lost money, and yet the industry keeps churning out more of the same. On the other hand, films that affirm what is culturally worthy, while often making big money at the box office, typically have a hard time getting to production. Again on CBS, Ken Wales, the producer of *Christy*, which is based on the much-loved book by Catherine Marshall, notes how the network has again and again torpedoed its great popularity by, among other things, constantly moving it around the viewing schedule. It is almost as though in some quarters there is a reflexive hatred of anything that is both successful and (ugh) wholesome.

The alienated artist—and it is entrenched in contemporary culture that artists must be alienated—claims that it is not just religion that must be attacked. The hostility is to all institutions that smack of authority (authority being synonymous with authoritarianism). Thus, for instance, the police, the military, the CIA, corporate leadership, and the political establishment are all candidates for regular exposure. That is partly true, but those institutions (corporate leadership excepted) also receive very favorable treatment in television and movies. Religion is different. The narrow-escape syndrome is not simply an individual phenomenon. The background assumption, often made explicit, is that the modern world itself has narrowly escaped from, i.e., has been liberated from, the tutelage of religion. In this view of things, the persistence of religion puts into jeopardy our ever fragile freedom from . . . From what? From religion, of course. This story line of secularization has been played out in a thousand variations for a long time, and is far from being exhausted.

Then too, it is fun, and probably a healthy thing, to make fun of the morally pretentious and pompous, which is what a great deal of religion is. Of course, in the view of some, any proposal that there is such a thing as moral truth is insufferably pretentious, pompous, and oppressive to boot. Yet serious religion cannot help but propose the truth, and should not be surprised by the brickbats received in turn. The Bennetts, Donohues, and Wildemons, along with the rest of us, will continue to protest, of course. Not just when the message is offensive to Christian faith and morals, but especially when it is so inelegantly and ignorantly offensive. The protest

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

might not have much effect on those who are beyond shame, or who, in the words of St. Paul, glory in their shame, thinking themselves to be the champions of liberation from religion's chains. They are in a perhaps irremediable state of suspended adolescence. But we have to hope that they are not the only ones with influence in the New York-Hollywood axis. In any event, the protest at least registers that, in a degenerate time, some people did not go along. That is no little thing to have on the public record when, as we have to believe is possible, our culture turns toward a more adult understanding of art and creativity.

FT

# What Dennis Prager Did, and Didn't, Learn in Yeshiva

"I'm sorry, but I find that hard to believe." He was a Harvard-trained lawyer in a large New York firm, and the subject was Jewish and Christian attitudes toward church-state relations. What he found hard to believe, what he obviously did not believe, was my observation that millions of Americans do not personally know any Jews. In a country where no more than 2 percent of the population is Jewish, and that 2 percent is concentrated in a few cities, many Americans have never, to their knowledge, met a Jew, and for a majority it is likely that there are no Jews among their friends, acquaintances, and associates. Jews growing up in, say, New York City and attending Ivy League schools understandably find that hard to believe. A colleague, a successful writer, says it was one of the great shocks of her childhood to learn that Jews are not at least half the American population. "I think somewhere in the back of my mind, contrary to what I know for a fact, I still believe we are at least 30 percent," she says.

Dennis Prager, editor of *Ultimate Issues*, recalls the isolation that came with attending a yeshiva, an Orthodox Jewish day school. Most Jews of course do not attend yeshiva, yet they, too, are frequently isolated. The difference is that Prager has good Jewish reasons for caring about non-Jews, even if his yeshiva teachers did not understand those reasons. These are among the questions engaged in Prager's reflection on what he learned, and did not learn, from attending yeshivas from age five through eighteen. He learned, for instance, about wasting time. "*Bitul torah* literally means 'annulling the Torah.' In practice it means 'wasting time that you could otherwise be devoting to something related to Torah.' The way it was taught to me, *bitul torah* covered just about everything not directly related to Torah. Watching television was therefore certainly *bitul torah*. But to some of my rabbis, so were Shakespeare, sports, and nonreligious music. They overdid it, but the concept of *bitul torah* has never left me. . . . Thanks to the concept of *bitul torah*, Judaism taught me that time may be God's most precious gift to us. To squander it is a sin. That is not the general attitude in secular society where 'killing time' is not considered a form of killing. But it is."

He also learned a truth so important that he thinks humanity can be divided between those who do and those who don't know it. "One night when my older son was in third grade, I asked him what he had learned that day in school, an Orthodox Jewish day school. 'That I have a *yetzer harah*,' he responded. I was delighted for both psychological and moral reasons. . . . The moral reason for my delight at my son's learning that he had a built-in bad inclination was that he would know from then on that life is a constant battle with his *yetzer harah*, i.e., with himself. This traditional Jewish belief is at total variance with the intellectual mindset of our time, which holds that the most important battle for us to wage is with our environment, with our society. A generation has been raised to believe that its greatest problems emanate from hostile and oppressive outside forces such as racism, sexism, and economic inequality." The awareness that the battle is within oneself, says Prager, "is a defining characteristic of the truly religious person," whether Jewish or not.

As is also a sense of *kedusha*, or holiness. "The sense that some behaviors, while not immoral, are still wrong because they are *unholy* is alien to a generation raised thoroughly secular. 'If it isn't illegal, it isn't an issue' can almost serve as a description of the secular mindset. There is a sort of secular equivalent to the religious concept of the unholy—'vulgar.' But vulgarity is not an often used term in our time, as it just doesn't seem to bother many people today." A sense of *kedusha*, as Prager discusses it, is not unrelated to the aesthetic, a sense of what is appropriate, and he laments what he thinks is the growing use of dirty language even in presumably polite company. But more than dirty language is at stake. "Awareness of *kedusha* had a powerful impact on me. By my late twenties, my premarital sexual life increasingly struck me as unholy (though not immoral, a distinction that must be strongly maintained). This awareness played a decisive role in moving me to get married."

Then there is the question of how you talk about others. "Perhaps my rudest awakening to the secular world after a lifetime in yeshiva was the amount of *lashon hara* I encountered. I remember the first time I heard that people could make a living as a 'gossip

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

columnist.' 'A *lashon hara* columnist!' I thought. I could hardly believe it. . . . Of course, all the public *lashon hara* is more than matched by all the private *lashon hara* that people engage in. At yeshiva, I learned the power of the tongue to destroy. Think of how long it takes to form a good opinion of a person after hearing just a *few seconds* of *lashon hara* about him."

Another lesson learned in yeshiva is likely of particular interest to authors. "According to the Talmud, 'Whoever cites the source for what he says brings redemption to the world.' This oft-cited quotation is literally true. If people would cite the source of an idea or quote that they express, they really would bring redemption to our unredeemed world. For it means that people would then be more interested in truth than in personal glory. . . . I am still taken aback when someone, *with all goodwill*, tells me, 'I stole one of your ideas in a speech that I gave.' When the source isn't cited, it *is* stealing."

And he learned to ask questions. "In the words of the Talmud, 'the shy one doesn't learn.' This is taught to yeshiva children from our earliest years. Ask, ask, and ask again. Not all questions were answered (see below), but asking was always encouraged. Friends who grew up in other religions are often amazed at the amount of questioning that went on in yeshiva." In sum, he learned that there is a code of right and wrong that overrides, or should override, one's own feelings. "The most powerful legacy of yeshiva education was the Halakhic mentality. Halakha is the word for Jewish law, and in the yeshiva, it is the guiding principle of life. Simply put, *there is a right and wrong for every action.* The emphasis, unfortunately, was more on the laws between man and God than on the laws between man and his fellow man, but there was plenty of teaching of the latter as well. . . . Again, when I attended college, I was struck by the fact that for most of my fellow students *everything seemed to be permitted.* This aroused in me ambivalent feelings of envy and fear. I envied their ability to do just about anything (like drive on Saturdays!), and feared that the lack of *issurim* (prohibitions) in their lives might lead to evil." Prager writes, "I suspect that even if a person from yeshiva overthrows the entire religious tradition, he will still go through life with the question, 'Is it permitted?' ringing in his ears."

### *And What He Did Not Learn*

There were also things he did not learn. "Despite all the encouragement of questioning at yeshiva, one seminal area of Judaism seemed to be off limits to questions—reasons for the laws. Not only were reasons not given, but we were largely taught that looking for reasons bordered on the sacrilegious." Prager says he now believes that every law in the Torah has a rational basis and "the more one understands these laws, the greater one's faith in them."

Most regrettably, the yeshiva turned the world beyond Orthodox Judaism into a non-reality, and "non-Jews became more of an abstraction than real people created in the image of God." "To this day, of course, the yeshiva world regards interfaith dialogue, for example, as ludicrous at best (true *bitul Torah*!) and prohibited at worst. And whereas it is common for Catholic schools to invite Jews to speak to Catholic students about Judaism, it is inconceivable that a yeshiva would invite a Catholic to speak to its students on Catholicism. Indeed, it is inconceivable that a yeshiva would allow a Conservative or Reform *Jew* to lecture about his movement. In the yeshiva, non-Jews—the people who comprise 99.8 percent of humanity—were rarely mentioned. Their significance lay only in their ability to hurt or help Jews. 'All I ask of the *goyim* is that they leave us alone,' is the way one rebbe put it. That was the entirety of his concern with the rest of the world."

Prager regrets also that the yeshiva did not teach him the personal character of the believer's relationship to God. "The first time I heard the words 'God loves you' was probably on a Christian radio or television show. The first time I heard the words 'personal relationship with God' was probably in a Christian context. The first time I heard a personal prayer—as opposed to a communal pre-written prayer—also was among Christians." Nonetheless, what he learned in yeshiva is, he is convinced, much more important than what he did not learn "Despite its flaws and though I am not Orthodox, I am profoundly grateful that I attended Orthodox day schools. As a prominent Reform Rabbi, David Woznica, has noted, he never met a Jew who regretted having attended yeshiva or day school, yet he has met innumerable Jews who deeply regret not having had such a Jewish education. . . . A child in an Orthodox day school studies under teachers who truly believe in God and Judaism. Their beliefs are more fundamentalist than mine, but I can temper those beliefs at home. *It is much easier to be the liberalizing and universalizing influence on a religious child than to be the religious influence on a secular child.*"

And, bringing us back to the opening question of Jewish isolationism, he learned, despite the practice of the yeshiva itself, why Jews must care about the rest of the world. "The purpose of the Jewish people is to influence humanity, specifically, to bring mankind to ethical monotheism, the one God and His one morality. In the yeshiva world, there is no thought of a mission to the non-Jewish world; the only purpose of a Jew is to learn more Torah and observe more mitzvot."

Dennis Prager is among a small but growing number of Jewish writers building bridges to Christians who are similarly concerned about the renewal of our culture. For the most part, the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bridges are not theological, but for the shared purpose of reviving moral and social responsibility they are indispensable. For Christians who have no personal engagement with Jews and Judaism, and for Christians who do, Dennis Prager and *Ultimate Issues* provide wisdom and encouragement in the penultimate effort to envision a more promising common future. (*Ultimate Issues*, published quarterly, is available for $28 per year. The address is 6020 Washington Boulevard, Culver City, CA 90232. Telephone: 310-558-3958. Fax: 310-558-4241.)

FT

# An Anglo-Catholic Hereafter

Confession time. It's always been fun to make fun of Anglicanism. And the fun-making is not unmixed with a seasoning of envy. I recall reading years ago an article in an Episcopalian magazine which contended that Anglicans really need not bother with evangelization since Anglicanism is "the finishing school" for people who had already been evangelized. The sheer pretentiousness of it. And yet, there was a lot to be pretentious about. Now it all seems to be in a shambles. William Oddie, a former C of E priest, is among those who have abandoned ship and found refuge in Rome. He writes regularly in the *Spectator* and elsewhere on why the jig is at last up with the C of E, and is just as regularly answered by loyalists who say, in effect and sometimes explicitly, that there will always be an England, and therefore there will always be a Church of England. I'm all right, Jack.

Cardinal Newman launched the Anglo-Catholic thing, of course, only to conclude, with great reluctance, that his idea of Anglicanism as a middle way (*via media*) was little more than a "paper church." Sheridan Gilley takes up that theme in a recent issue of the *Tablet*. He, too, has been drawn to the capacious bosom of Mother Rome, but he has poignant memories of what used to be home: "The decline of Anglo-Catholicism seems to me to be a serious impoverishment of Christianity. The High Church tradition took all that is best and most beautiful in the Church of England, the King James Bible, the Book of Common Prayer, with its wonderful Cranmerian cadences, the ancient English cathedrals and parish churches, a tradition of literature and of learning, and the kindness, gentleness, and tolerance of English life, and enriched them with judicious borrowings from the doctrine, devotion, and scholarship of the wider Catholic world. It seemed the perfect meeting-place between Catholicity and Englishness, without the harshness or philistinism of English Roman Catholicism. Now that whole Anglican Gothic world has come to grief. Anglo-Catholicism, the most culturally attractive form of Christianity that I have ever encountered, is bound to be no more than a *preparatio evangelica* to positions more coherent than itself. In its learning, its devotion, its sheer beauty, it is a preparation without equal, but no more. The matter can be put more positively. If I might paraphrase an old Anglo-Catholic, G. W. E. Russell, *Sit anima mea cum sanctis*: may my lot be with the Anglo-Catholic saints from whose lips I first learned of the doctrine of the Church."

And so, in this view, Anglicanism is not the "finishing school" but a *preparatio evangelica*, the narthex, so to speak, on the way to the real thing. I read the Gilley article in a cab on the way downtown to have lunch with Monsignor Alfred Gilbey. He is the author of a number of books widely read in England (his *We Believe* will, he hopes, be coming out here soon), and something of a curmudgeonly legend. He was, as is his custom, nicely turned out in a cassock with purple piping and cummerbund, having just come from doing a television program with Mother Angelica. At age ninety-four, he was making his first visit to these shores, and seemed utterly fascinated by all he had seen in his first week. "I won't wait so long before coming again," he said. A luncheon partner turned the talk to the C of E and whether it was at last finished. "Oh nonsense," said the Monsignor, sipping a very nice chardonnay. "It will last as long as England. It is England. One doesn't join it for any reason, and one doesn't have to have a reason to leave it. It's the official cultural presentation of Christianity. It will go on and on." Pausing, he added, "But of course one must understand that it has absolutely nothing to do with truth."

A few years ago, a senior prelate of the C of E visited our offices. He had written extensively on secularization theory and professed himself to be a fan of my own work. "How," I ventured in the course of conversation, "would you define the mission of the Church of England." He paused for a moment and answered in most agreeable tone, "Well, I suppose it is to keep alive the Christian alternative for people who are interested in that sort of thing. There will always be some, you know." It is only tenuously related to truth, but the charm of it cannot be denied. *Sit anima mea cum sanctis.* On the assumption, of course, that Anglicans, too, can be saved. (To protesting reader: What? You took that seriously? How very un-Anglican.)

FT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# THE POSTMODERN MUDDLE OF CORNEL WEST

That the self-described postmodernist Cornel West supposes the vocabularies of Marxism, Pragmatism, and Liberalism to be interchangeable is bad enough. But it is when West calls his whole postmodern Marxist-Pragmatist-Liberal muddle "Christianity," and himself a "prophetic Christian freedom fighter," that he makes it hard for thoughtful people to take him seriously. Leon Wieseltier of the *New Republic*, frequently a thoughtful person, has clearly had enough. A while back he had this to say: "The union of theory and practice, in West's hands, becomes a union of pomposity and enthusiasm. . . . West skips undialectically from the seminar to the street, celebrating his connectedness. This has ridiculous results. . . . It does not escape his notice that 'the agapic praxis of communities' was abandoned in the late work of Marvin Gaye, and that a change in the image of the Temptations 'could not give Motown hegemonic status on fast funk.'"

But the most embarrassingly dated feature of West's writing, according to Wieseltier, is his political theory. His "published work is an endless exercise in misplaced Marxism. . . . There is something puerile about West's Marxism. . . . He writes like a man who refuses to accept the fact that he was born too late for a particular excitement. . . . It is hard to read West's descriptions of, say, the Black Panthers as 'the leading black lumpenproletarian revolutionary party of the sixties' without recalling Trotsky's oration to the 'workers and peasants of the South Bronx.'"

It is fine for West to declare that he upholds "the Christocentric perspective which requires that one see the world through the lens of the Cross." But when he adds that we "thereby see our relative victimizing and relative victimization," he has changed Christianity into something different. "West is dead to difference," Wieseltier writes. "He is a hero in a culture of morbidity, in which wounds are jewels. And his appropriation of what he calls 'the Christocentric perspective' for the politics of victimization in America is preposterous. It is banal at best, and it is blasphemous at worst, to describe the crucifixion of Jesus as victimization, in the sense in which we recognize victimization. No road runs from Calvary to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission."

From the Marxist-Pragmatist-Liberal muddle that West calls Christianity, West produces a remarkable notion of his role in the world. "My attempt to put flexible Marxist analysis on the agenda of the black churches is a pioneering endeavor," he declares. Reminding us that his upbringing instilled in him an "ego-deflating humility," he informs us that he is now a prophet, and "the mark of the prophet is to speak the truth in love with courage—come what may." His prophetic criticism, he reports, "is partisan, partial, engaged and crisis-centered, yet always keeps open a skeptical eye to avoid dogmatic traps, premature closures, formulaic formulations, or rigid closures." Wieseltier notes that West complains that nine taxis refused to take him to East Harlem where he was to be photographed among the masses for the dust cover of his latest book. West is indignant at the Manhattan cabbies, although he tells us, "I left my car—a rather elegant one—in a safe parking lot." Wieseltier observes, "So the taxis would not take him where he would not take his car! This is not precisely what Gramsci had in mind."

None of this silliness would be of much importance if major black social critics such as Glenn Loury, Stanley Crouch, and Shelby Steele were not so often denigrated in comparison with the much-celebrated Cornel West. "By overlooking [the social circumstances of American blacks]," West has written, "the new black conservatives fall into the trap of blaming poor black people for their predicament." This is of course grotesquely unfair. "I do not hear them blaming people for being poor," writes Wieseltier. "I hear them blaming people for abandoning families." Without some understanding of social responsibility, there is no solution to the plight of American blacks in the muddle of West's version of Christianity. Is Leon Wieseltier unfair? At the margins, probably. But it does seem that Mr. West should slow down and listen to what he is saying if he wants to avoid the fate of being dismissed as an upmarket Al Sharpton.

FT

# CONSERVATISM? WHAT CONSERVATISM?

Michael Lind has moved from *Harper's* to the *New Republic*, and in his first cover story as a senior editor he explains that there has been no conservative revolution, only a Republican coup taking over the South. The new Republicans, unlike the old, are anti-intellectual. As evidence of the high intellectual caliber of the old Republicans, Lind notes that "President James Garfield was fluent in Latin and Greek, Theodore Roosevelt wrote more than a dozen books . . . and Dwight Eisenhower was president of Columbia University." There you have it. As everyone knows, Teddy Roosevelt's adventure stories are the subject of elevated academic seminars to this very day. As for Garfield, Lind has to add the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

title President lest readers mistake the name for that of a famous movie star, so great has been James Garfield's intellectual legacy. Best of all, though, is Eisenhower as president of Columbia. Lind is probably too young to remember the Columbia faculty's embarrassment about his being given that post as a port of convenience for the months between the Army and the White House.

Lind allows that liberals are to blame for the Republican takeover of the South. "Liberals first nationalized issues like censorship, abortion, and gay rights, inadvertently calling into being national versions of the local religious pressure groups that used to lobby state legislatures." But please understand, Lind insists, that issues like censorship, abortion, and gay rights have nothing to do with conservatism. It's this Southern thing, you see. (It is encouraging, however, that the senior editor of the *New Republic* apparently believes that issues such as censorship, abortion, and gay rights should be returned to states and localities.) Democrats have to make clear, says Lind, that Republicans do not speak for a new American majority. In fact, the Republican Party "is little more than the mouthpiece for the least 'American' section of the country."

That piece of bigotry triggers in Lind a vestigial liberal bias against bigotry, prompting him to ask, "Does this sound prejudiced?" In response to his own question, he offers the some-of-my-best-friends-are argument, noting that he is descended from men who fought for the Confederacy. "I would never suggest," says Lind, "that Southerners, as such, be attacked or derided." No prejudice there; it is only the South that is to be attacked and derided. Lind concludes: "Resisting the Southernization of America is a political task principled Southerners [a distinct minority, he makes clear] and Northerners [all of us, presumably] should be able to agree upon." It is truly wondrous the lengths to which some people will go to deny that we are in the midst of a national conservative revival, even if it requires refighting the Civil War. The *Standard*, a weekly edited by Bill Kristol, has appeared just in time to provide us with a national magazine of thoughtful political and cultural opinion.

FT

# A Clarification on Capital Punishment

When the encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* (The Gospel of Life) appeared this spring, there was considerable confusion about what it said about capital punishment. The confusion was not caused by the language of the encyclical itself, which seemed to constitute only a prudential judgment that, in some contemporary circumstances, the death penalty is no longer necessary and therefore should not be used. The confusion came, rather, from press reports about Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger's remarks when introducing the encyclical in Rome. These reports suggested that Ratzinger had said that the statements on the death penalty reflected a development of doctrine, and that the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, issued only last year in English, would have to be revised in light of the encyclical. Many close readers of the encyclical did not discern any development of doctrine, and worried that a catechism that is subject to regular recall could not serve as a reliable guide to the Church's official teaching.

So we asked Cardinal Ratzinger for a clarification, and are pleased to publish, with his permission, his response: "You ask about the correct interpretation of the teaching of the encyclical on the death penalty. Clearly, the Holy Father has not altered the doctrinal principles which pertain to this issue as they are presented in the Catechism, but has simply deepened the application of such principles in the context of present-day historical circumstances. Thus, where other means for the self-defense of society are possible and adequate, the death penalty may be permitted to disappear. Such a development, occurring within society and leading to the foregoing of this type of punishment, is something good and ought to be hoped for.

"In my statements during the presentation of the encyclical to the press, I sought to elucidate these elements, and noted the importance of taking such circumstantial considerations into account. It is in this sense that the Catechism may be rewritten, naturally without any modification of the relevant doctrinal principles.

"Of course it must be remembered that the substance of the text as approved by the Apostolic Constitution *Fidei Depositum* is to remain unchanged; at the same time, however, the preparation of the *editio typica*, the official Latin text, affords the Church, as was explained when the vernacular versions were published, the opportunity to introduce small clarifications and minor improvements. While there is certainly no intention of including references to every document issued since the appearance of the Catechism, in the specific case of the Church's teaching on capital punishment many opinions have been expressed in favor of an *aggorniamento* of the text in the light of the papal teaching in *Evangelium Vitae*. Such suggestions appear to be well-founded, consonant as they are with the substance of the text as it presently stands in the Catechism."

The above clarification should be welcomed by

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Catholics who may in good faith disagree over whether the death penalty is necessary for the defense of society, and by the many other people who depend upon the constancy of the Church's teaching. We expect it will not be so very welcome among those who have triumphantly declared that *Evangelium Vitae* condemns capital punishment, while they have at the same time largely ignored the encyclical's forceful and unambiguous condemnation of abortion, euthanasia, and other crimes that characterize "the culture of death."

FT

# THERE IS ONLY ONE JERUSALEM

During the debate over whether the U.S. should recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, the editors of the *New Republic*, supporting the change, weighed in with a curious and potentially ominous argument. "Of course," they wrote, "Jerusalem is sacred to the three monotheistic religions. But it is sacred with a difference. . . . Its meaning is not equal for them. In Christendom and Islam there are many spiritual centers and many symbolic capitals. In Judaism and for the Jewish people, there is only one Jerusalem. This establishes a special bond and a special right."

For Muslims, the Dome of the Rock and al-Aqsa Mosque is the third most holy site in the world, following Mecca and Medina. It is a grave injustice to Islam to refer to it dismissively as one of "many spiritual centers and many symbolic capitals." As for Christians, it is both misleading and reckless for the editors to suggest that Christians do not have a special bond and right to Jerusalem. Misleading because, for Christians as for Jews, "there is only one Jerusalem." The other four great patriarchal sees of Christendom (Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinople) are in no way comparable to the unique place of Jerusalem. True, Roman Catholics have a very special attachment to Rome, but just down the road from Jerusalem God became man; in Jerusalem the Son of God suffered, died, and rose again; and Jerusalem is the earthly precursor of the Heavenly City of eschatological hope. Christians, too, pray, "If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither! Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you, if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy!" (Psalm 137)

This is not to suggest that Jerusalem is as important to most Christians as it is to most Jews. But nobody should make exclusive claims. In support of the unique claim of Jews to the city, the *New Republic* says that "there is also the fact that Jewish sons fought . . . for their nation's reunion with its place of birth, and they won." Well, it is also Christianity's place of birth, and Christian sons also fought for it, and won, and possessed it for centuries. As, for that matter, did Muslim sons for a considerable period of time. Certainly for a longer period of time than Jews have possessed it in the last two millennia. If military victory establishes the right to possession, one notes that the still tenuous hold of Israel dates only from 1967. The suggested fit between moral claim and military success does not work, as Israel would be the first to point out were it ever, God forbid, to be militarily defeated.

### *A Good Steward*

As the editorial is misleading, it is also reckless. U.S. support for Israel, including but not limited to many billions of dollars, is largely premised upon the true belief that Israel has been a good steward of the diverse religious legacies of the land and the city. The *New Republic*'s suggestion that Jerusalem is an exclusively Jewish city, with a few others tolerated as guests and non-Jewish sacred places maintained as little more than museums, is not likely to sit well with Christians whose support Israel needs and will need as far into the future as anyone can see. The complex history of Christian attachment to Jerusalem is recounted in Robert L. Wilken's much acclaimed *The Land Called Holy* (Yale, 1992). Wilken underscores the importance of a living Christian presence in the Holy Land, a presence that has been dangerously reduced in recent years. The *New Republic* states, "All over the world, there are sacred cities and sites of one religious group living under the sovereignty of another." Yes, like Hindu temples under Muslims, or the great cathedral of Santa Sophia in Istanbul. More encouraging examples do not come readily to mind.

Christians in Jerusalem increasingly complain about what they describe as the "ethnic cleansing" against Christians. Protests were intense when, some while back, the Likud government pressed for expropriation of land and property, including St. John's Hospice in the Christian quarter, close to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The Vatican recently summoned the Israeli ambassador to protest plans for the expropriation of property belonging to the Cremisan monastery on a hilltop near Jerusalem and Bethlehem. That plan was cancelled, but Christian leaders complain that in a few more years time there will be no more Christians left in Jerusalem. According to some, the Christian Arab community has already been reduced to 120,000 in the entirety of Israel. In the absence of a vibrant Christian community, it is feared, Jerusalem will become for Christians no more than a city of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

religious museums, albeit museums made accessible by a government not indifferent to the economic importance of tourism. The exodus of Christians, it should be noted, is caused not only by Jewish pressure but also by the politics of Arab Muslims who make life in Israel increasingly difficult also for Arab Christians.

It may be a good idea for the U.S. to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. It is a very bad idea to argue for such a change by claiming that Jerusalem is an exclusively Jewish city, and that the attachments of Muslims and Christians to the city are, at most, of incidental importance. Jerusalem is the earthly center of the story of the world's salvation, and as such belongs to the world. Spiritual history and political history do not necessarily coincide. The political sovereignty of Israel over Jerusalem is the instrument that, for almost thirty years, has protected the city and allowed it to flourish in a manner that is accessible to the world—or at least to those parts of the world that are not threatening the existence of Israel. It is a political arrangement that, given the tortured history of the place, has worked reasonably well, and there is probably no alternative to it. The security of the arrangement requires, however, that Israel continue to recognize that it is the guardian of a city that belongs to the world. Jerusalem is not simply a national capital in the sense that Washington, Ottawa, or Baghdad are national capitals. Jerusalem is different, and the continued acknowledgment of that difference is crucial to the support of Israel as protector of a piece of the world that Jews, Christians, and Muslims interpret differently but revere in common. Most Jews, fortunately, do not need to be reminded of that.

FT

# While We're At It

■ *The Snarling Citizen* is a book of essays of Barbara Ehrenreich, many of which appeared first in the *Nation*, the storm-tossed flagscow of the left. *Publishers Weekly* describes her as "a superlative writer" who challenges "political correctness and sloppy thinking." Cited as an example is her differentiation between a cult and a religion. "Forty-eight people donning plastic and shooting themselves in the head is a 'cult,' while a hundred million people bowing before a flesh-hating elderly celibate is obviously a world-class religion." "Before you can draw breath," says *PW*, "she polishes off a few more sacred cows." For instance: "A half dozen Trotskyists meeting over coffee is a 'sect,' while a few million gun-toting, Armageddon-ready Baptists are referred to as the Republican Party." *PW* says that the reader "will have a roller coaster ride with these bracing doses of verbal purgative." People taking purgatives are well advised to stay off roller coasters.

■ In a front page story in the *New York Times*, Dr. Henry W. Foster, Jr. reflects on his rejection by the Senate as Surgeon General. The issue was abortion, he says, noting that as an obstetrician he "actually had two patients." That's encouraging, but then this: "And sometimes one has to be given priority. And if a woman looks me in the eye if she has a pregnancy that's going to take her life, I know what my choice is, both morally and legally, and I carry that out at the request of my patients." Uh huh. Dr. Foster had some notable memory problems, it may be remembered. After describing in detail what a personally wrenching experience it was to do an abortion, he then seemed not able to recall whether he had done one, two, or, as it appeared in the end, possibly several hundred of them. But now he is more careful: "*If* a woman looks me in the eye *if* she has a pregnancy that's going to take her life." He was not rejected because he performed an abortion in a case where a pregnancy threatened the life of the mother, which almost never happens, and we can be quite sure never happened to him. He was rejected because he is a staunch supporter of abortion on demand, and because he appears to have a continuing problem with prevarication.

■ Ecumenism (although, for understandable reasons, some don't like the term) is breaking out all over. Probably a "first," according to Johann Christoph Arnold, Elder of the Hutterian Brethren in Rifton, New York, was a meeting with John Cardinal O'Connor of New York on March 4. Not in 450 years, he thinks, has there been such a meeting between Hutterites and a representative of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. He spoke to the Cardinal about the fierce persecutions Roman Catholics inflicted upon Hutterites in the Reformation era, and expressed his conviction that "from both sides we must seek reconciliation and forgiveness; it is so much better to set something right in this world than in the next." Cardinal O'Connor expressed his desire to accept an invitation to speak to the Hutterite community (Bruderhof), which is located in the New York Archdiocese. The Hutterites operate the Plough Publishing House, which has recently published *Discipleship* by J. Heinrich Arnold, with a foreword by Father Henri Nouwen. For more information on their publications, write The Plough, Rd. 2, Box 446, Farmington, PA 15437.

■ The problem with the religious right, according to *Fortune* magazine, is that it has little or no use for

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

big business. The cover story, "Today's GOP: The Party is over for Big Business," declares that "in a political arena now dominated by small business populists, anti-government conservatives, and the religious right, corporate America's the odd man out—mistrusted, resented, impotent." As one rightist is quoted, "Ours is the party of small business, not big business. Of Main Street, not Wall Street." In the view of religious conservatives, corporate America has either absented itself from, or been on the wrong side of, the culture wars. Examining the corporate giving of the Fortune 500, the Capital Research Center finds that they give $3.42 to leftist organizations (including, in a big way, Planned Parenthood) for each dollar given to nonprofits on the right. A *Fortune* survey of CEOs finds that 22 percent of them are worried about the influence of the religious right, and 59 percent are adamantly pro-abortion—"A woman should be able to have an abortion if she wants one, no matter the reason." It should come as no surprise that big business, which long ago embraced peaceful coexistence with big government, should be uncomfortable with the new populism. Many corporate executives are capitalists with a bad conscience about capitalism and are eager to demonstrate their "social responsibility" as responsibility is defined by the enemies of capitalism. In addition, in many cities the Planned Parenthood gala is one of the big tickets of the social season for people who would not be caught dead at a right-to-life meeting. The only surprising thing is that journalists are still surprised by a conservatism that does not conform to the formulaic assumption that conservatives like big business. It is not inconceivable, however, that the social conservatism that is transforming our political culture may, in time, begin to reach even the boardroom.

■ "I argue that in American culture, on the whole, language of the sacred, even language of God, can be pragmatically justified." That's a relief; religion is given another reprieve. Even language about God!—although only "on the whole," of course. The above bold assertion is offered by William Dean, professor of religion at Gustavus Adolphus College (Lutheran), in his new book *The Religious Critic in American Culture* (State University of New York Press). Dean is reviewed by United Methodist Philip Blackwell in the pages of *Christian Century*, who likes the book very much. Says Blackwell, "Many of us cannot in good faith subscribe to the claims of Christianity in a literal way, but we refuse to throw out the essential truths carried by the tradition. We are left to make something of the conventions of our faith." A convention is defined "as a social tradition that has developed through several generations. It is neither a claim to an objective and universal truth nor the exercise of arbitrary and subjective willfulness." It seems that the religious tradition that will come to the rescue of American culture has been developed over several generations, going back all the way to the ancients of the late nineteenth century. While its adherents do not subscribe to it in any literal sense and it is not "true" in any ordinary meaning of the term, it is nonetheless the bearer of "essential truths." Lest we suspect him of rigid adherence to an authoritarian tradition, Blackwell assures us that "conventions are revised continually by present interpretations." People who think the way he does, Blackwell suggests, are the answer to his question, "In a culture that has lost its bearings, who can speak a word of confident direction?" It would appear that another Great Awakening may be on the way, what with people like Dean and Blackwell who are sensitively revising the, er, essential, so to speak, truths, as it were, of religious conventions constructed by three or more generations of liberal Protestantism. Blackwell concludes: "At a time when people are so desperate for stability that they try to recreate a past that never existed, who can show a new way forward? In a public conversation where talk of the sacred often is embarrassing, cynical, or self-serving, who can reclaim the noble vocabulary of our shared conventions? Dean says that it can be done, and that it must be done quickly or we will lose the conventional wisdom that has brought us this far." The conventional wisdom that brought us to our present sorry pass has, in fact, lost its hold on more thoughtful Christians. Nonetheless, folk like Dean and Blackwell who are so desperate to believe that, in the absence of truth, their religion might still have some social utility will continue to console themselves with conventional nostrums such as "on the whole, language of the sacred, even language of God, can be pragmatically justified."

■ The picture we see when we close our eyes and try to imagine the New Jerusalem, we have to admit, looks a lot like New York—a New York cleaned up considerably, it's true, and with less traffic and fewer pigeons, but recognizably New York nonetheless. Now, we never supposed that our picture of the heavenly city is exactly the same as anyone else's—lots of people don't live in New York, and some people even live in California—but it seems we may have been too hasty in modestly supposing our vision to be unique. Some months ago *New York* magazine carried a report of Hollywood stars and executives moving to New York, drawn back by the theaters, the restaurants, the variety of people, and the churches. "There is not much of a [Catholic] community for us in LA," one actor reports. "For us as people who want our kids to know what it's about, here [in NY] there are not only gorgeous, wonderful churches that are showing the art and playing the music, but also fabulously intelligent and gifted people who are practicing Catholics the kids can identify with." "My heart is in the East, while I am in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the uttermost West," quotes the Jewish president of one film production company. "To me, the Diaspora begins in New Jersey."

■ We have no hard data on the question, but suspect that few of our readers also read *Rolling Stone*. For which reason we are indebted to John Farrell of Braintree, Mass. who does. A recent issue featured rock star Dolores O'Riordan, a lady from Limerick who wears about twenty earrings and is lead singer of the Cranberries, a group that is, says Mr. Farrell, on its way to becoming No. 1 on some chart or the other. She appears to be a person of definite views, including this from the article: "And don't count on O'Riordan as an ally in defending abortion: 'I'm in no position to judge other women, you know? But, I mean, "Idiot—why didn't you not get pregnant?" It's not good for women to go through the procedure and have something living sucked out of your bodies. It belittles women—even though some women say, "Oh, I don't mind to have one." Every time a woman has an abortion, it just crushes her self-esteem, smaller and smaller and smaller.'" *Rolling Stone* yet. How au courant dare we be?

■ The editors of the *Globe and Mail* of Toronto do some heavy-duty pondering on what-it-all-means under the title "The Ongoing Quest for Meanings." Democracy and capitalism seem to have carried the day, but that victory may be challenged from "outside the box." By that phrase they mean "the paradigm of social discourse as we have conceived it. In modern times, the box in which we have conducted our political lives has been largely secular. The victory of democratic capitalism within that box may well be challenged by religious or spiritual movements outside it." Hmm. They seem not to have considered that democratic capitalism may find its surest foundation in religion, which is the argument of the 1991 encyclical *Centesimus Annus*. The editors go on to worry that the stage may be set for serious confrontation "if religious matters return to the public realm," which is what they see happening in the U.S. They continue: "On its own, ethnicity is a form of secular-spiritualism, religion without God, identity without faith. Where religious revivals do not take hold, ethnic ones may. The politics of identity does not require a church." It is not clear whether they favor such ethnic revival over the return of religion to the public realm. We hope not, since we have had in this century some rather unhappy experiences with the pseudo-religion of ethnicity. National Socialism, for instance. The editors conclude: "We need keep our guard, in this context, against the claims of conviction over knowledge, faith over ideas, purity over tolerance of the diversity that makes us whole." There is another way of thinking about these things. For instance, conviction grounded in knowledge, faith as assent to ideas that are true, and a morality that requires tolerance of diversity. The *Globe and Mail*'s way of putting the alternatives is very neatly, and tightly, within the paradigm box of modern secular discourse. As for what "makes us whole," it is precisely the genius of the biblical tradition that it holds out no hope of that happening short of the coming of the Kingdom of God. But the editorial is more thoughtful than the customary newspaper fare, and we do hope that the editors' ongoing quest for meanings will be ongoing.

■ Marriage is bad for liberalism, or so it seems. "Ed Miller of the Luntz Research Companies tells the *Women's Quarterly* that his company's polling data reveals a 'marriage gap' in voting last November: Married people were more likely to have voted Republican than their single counterparts. 'A majority of married voters, both with (55 percent) and without kids (53 percent), cast GOP ballots,' he reports. 'Singles with no kids were split between the two major parties, with 43 percent for each. Singles with kids were slightly more likely to vote Democratic than Republican (45 percent vs. 43 percent).' Miller notes that single parents are more likely to be women than men." The *Women's Quarterly* is a combatively humorous new publication that is well worth a look. The lead article in this issue is "That's No White Male, That's My Husband." For information, write Independent Women's Forum, 2111 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 550, Arlington, VA 22201-3057.

■ Some moral crusades pay very well indeed. The *New York Times* reports on "legal buccaneers" who have banded together in the hope of extracting billions of dollars from the tobacco companies in class action suits. "Close to sixty prominent law firms known for so-called toxic torts are contributing $100,000 each to a consortium, filling an annual war chest of nearly $6 million. 'The good of the whole enterprise has transcended the individual egos,' said Ronald L. Motley, who has won billions of dollars in damages against the asbestos industry in the last decade." The lawyers include the King of Torts (Melvin M. Belli), the Master of Disaster (Stanley M. Chesley), Bhopal Coale (John P. Coale), and the Asbestos Avenger (Motley). "I am a pirate," Mr. Coale said proudly. "I have been described as an ambulance chaser, and I don't disagree." Paul Huard, who lobbied Congress to make tort law less favorable to legal pirates, said, "The assumption is that nothing is ever an accident and no one is at fault for their actions. A large part of this is fostered by the trial bar." Law professor Kenneth Abraham of the University of Virginia observes, "The real clients in a class action are the attorneys. The cynical view would be that class actions are a form of blackmail" intended to make companies settle quickly. Belli and his fellow buccaneers do not even pretend to challenge that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cynical view. As the Apostle put it, they glory in their shame.

■ "Your problem," a pro-life member of Congress was recently told, "is that you're hung up by single-issue politics." The member in question had indicated that she was prepared to oppose an important bill if it included support for abortion. She has this habit of carrying around clippings and, in response to her critic, she pulled out this one from the *New York Times* of August 24, 1994: "Because of Louisiana's ban on financing abortions for victims of rape and incest, the Clinton Administration has threatened to cut off $3 billion in Medicaid money that pays for health care for 600,000 people." Now *that* is single-issue politics.

■ Decline? What decline? Going up against what "everybody knows," James D. Davidson of Purdue University has produced a study purporting to show that the influence of mainline Protestantism is not slipping. Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and members of the United Church of Christ are still represented in the several American establishments way out of proportion to their numbers in the general population. "If you stepped into a board meeting of a business giant," says Davidson, "our research shows that you still would find several Episcopalians, a few Presbyterians, probably a Jew, and a Catholic, and no Baptists." All very interesting, but how many of them are in church on Sunday? And what bearing does their personal status and power have on the social influence of the churches of which they are members? The numerous studies that Davidson aims to counter got it right: The decline of oldline Protestantism gives every evidence of being in uninterrupted free-fall.

■ This item is left over from the 1994 meeting of the Episcopal House of Bishops. During the debate on a pastoral letter dealing with sexuality, Bishop William Frey observed: "It's evident we're not prepared to teach much of anything, because we disagree on the meaning of so many words. We've been doing theology in a Hegelian fashion for so long that the center keeps shifting. Today I can say 'Jesus is Lord' and that's the thesis. Someone else can say 'Jesus is not Lord' and that's the antithesis. The Anglican *via media* then becomes 'Jesus is occasionally Lord.' I would like a clear admission that we are unclear."

■ This from the medical journal *Lancet*: "The Dutch Supreme Court this week recognized that euthanasia or assisted suicide could be necessary for patients with mental suffering, and it ruled that doctors should consult a colleague before reaching such a decision, as is the case for patients with unbearable physical suffering. However, for patients with mental suffering, the Supreme Court says that the independent expert should actually examine the patient." Unless, of course, it is an emergency.

■ *Terrible Honesty* is Ann Douglas' intriguing new book on New York in the 1920s, reviewed by Janet Marsden in these pages. In an interview, Ms. Douglas reflects on why it is so difficult for rebels of today to be honest in the way that "the lost generation" of the 1920s thought they were being terribly honest. "What is irretrievably lost, says Ms. Douglas, is what she calls 'terrible honesty'—a relentless effort to root out and eliminate the falsehoods ingrained in our national psyche. 'To believe in it, you have to think there is a truth that can be found, and that's not a postmodernist position,' she explained. 'You have to be closer to religious origins—the generation of the twenties was truly secular in that it still knew its theology and its varieties of religious experience. We are post-secular, inventing new faiths, without any sense of organizing truths. The truths we accept are so multiple that honesty becomes little more than a strategy by which you manage your tendencies toward duplicity.'"

■ After less than three years, the Rev. John Pridonoff has resigned as executive director of the Hemlock Society, the premier organization promoting the elimination of *Lebens unvertesleben*, life not worthy of life. A United Church of Christ minister, Pridonoff sought to "moderate the image of the organization" by providing religious reasons for euthanasia, in order to counter the formidable religious opposition to Hemlock and all its works and all its ways (along with its sentimental pomps, of course). It did not seem to work very well. Under Pridonoff's leadership, membership dropped from from 57,000 to 40,000, although he says it is because he counts membership in a way different from his predecessor, Hemlock founder Derek Humphry. Humphry counted as a member anyone who gave money, while Pridonoff counted only those who paid the $35 annual dues or $275 lifetime memberships. Lifetime membership in the Hemlock Society strikes us as a dubious investment.

■ And we have a winner in the Moral Equivalency Contest. The headline in the *New York Times* reads, "Amendment to Protect Flag Wins House Panel's Approval." The sidebar reads, "In the balance: a cherished icon and a cherished right." Ah yes, how to resolve the conflict between those attached to two grand old American traditions, saluting the flag and burning it.

■ We're in the process of doing a new survey of subscribers. If you are one of those randomly chosen to get the questionnaire, please do help by filling it out and returning it promptly. We will of course share pertinent findings with all our readers. One thing we know about our readers already: don't say anything even mildly critical about the Catholic side

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the troubles in Northern Ireland, unless you want a torrent of protest letters. All we did, actually, was quote a Brit who said that Gerry Adams of Sinn Fein, and great friend of President Clinton, has not come clean about the blood on his hands. Maybe it was the fact that we were quoting a Brit. It's hard to get around the fact that Sinn Fein, which commands no more than 10 percent of the vote among Catholics in Northern Ireland, enjoys the clout it does because of the reality and threat of violence. That's ordinarily called terrorism, and it doesn't make any moral difference whether it's terrorism in what one thinks is a good cause. Or that there's terrorism on the other side. In any event, here's an interview with Mr. Adams that should give pause to serious Catholics. Speaking to *Reality*, the journal of the Irish Redemptorists, Adams declares himself an "à la carte Catholic" who would like to see a "Catholic Church with a Presbyterian structure." (And he's on the Catholic side of the troubles over there?) Mr. Adams says he does believe in God, and thinks it useful "to reflect and be contemplative." "I think that some of the Catholic ceremonies actually aid that," he generously allows. Asked whom he "admired," he lists Jesus Christ along with Nelson Mandela and Bobby Sands, but said that his greatest inspiration comes from the Beatles, Bob Dylan, and the protests of the 1960s. Mr. Adams has also indicated that he thinks socialism is the necessary future of Ireland, and he deplores the fact that so many people think that the collapse of the Evil Empire has discredited the socialist ideal. (Letters of protest should be directed to Managing Editor Matthew Berke, who is in charge of diplomatic responses.)

■ The contents page of the June 19 *New Yorker*: "The Road to Paranoia. Why do millions of Americans suddenly think that the government is the enemy? The author traces how the fringe left and right found common ground with the mainstream." Now let's see, who does that leave out?

■ The head of the Science and Human Dimension project at Cambridge, England, John Cornwell, writes in the *Tablet* that genetic research is moving at such a pace that the ethical disputes of even ten years ago now seem ancient. That was when people started genetic screening with a view toward aborting the unfit. Now researchers concentrate on gene markers, looking for "norms" of human behavior, e.g., violence, criminality, and levels of intelligence. Plans are in the works for interventions that will alter genes by "carrier" techniques in test tubes and fully developed human beings—techniques that will transmit "corrections" on the backs of harmless viruses. "The prospect of a supermarket of designer genes—both for the sick and the healthy—is not far off, and along with it a new set of social and ethical questions. Who will benefit from the new genetic therapies? How is the gold rush for gene patenting to be controlled? Do insurers have a right to know our individual genetic makeup? Will genetic screening create a new underclass of the uninsurable and unemployable? Do we have a right *not* to know our genetic futures? Should we be allowed to choose the intelligence level, the height, the hair color, the sexual orientation of our children? Is a new dark age of eugenics looming?" Some years ago I wrote a much-reprinted article on these questions, "The Return of Eugenics" (*Commentary*, April 1988). Among the troubling things is that thoughtful people keep repeating the questions, wringing their hands with moral earnestness, and come up with the conclusion that we should all be terribly anguished about these matters. True enough, but one wonders whether it is getting us anywhere worth getting to. In recent months, a very broad assortment of religious leaders in this country came out for the legal prohibition of gene patenting, and we will be returning to that in these pages. Meanwhile, readers can prepare themselves for the controversies ahead by rereading C. S. Lewis' *The Abolition of Man* (available in several anthologies), Leon Kass' *Toward a More Natural Science*, and John Paul II's eleventh encyclical, *Evangelium Vitae*, on "the culture of death." These are not exercises in futurism. The future is now. (The foregoing item is offered in the event that you have been having a nice day so far.)

■ A mission tour of Lutheran churches in Slovakia is scheduled for April 10-25, 1996. For information, contact Pr. Dan Biles, Box 449, Bendersville, PA. 17306. This is close to our heart because it is connected with our friend Pr. Paul Hinlicky, a Lutheran seminary professor in Slovakia who is doing, among many other things, some pioneering work in opening up Lutheran-Roman Catholic theological dialogue in that country.

■ The perception is that Senator D. Patrick Moynihan of New York, who for decades was considered an expert on these matters, has been sidelined in the current debate over welfare reform. He is out of sync with both Republicans and Democrats in his belief that welfare should be viewed as an entitlement. He told the *New York Times*, "I just do what the Catholic bishops tell me. Write that down. They've been at this a hell of a lot longer than anyone else." He later called the reporter to amend his remarks to a less sweeping statement: "I follow the Catholic bishops on this." A good thing, too, since Moynihan has a consistent, and as yet publicly unexplained, pro-abortion voting record.

■ The last line is the payoff in William McGurn's *Wall Street Journal* review of two books on the 1960s. The one by Terry H. Anderson (*The Movement and the Sixties*) is a celebration of that period as a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sustained moral protest against all that is wrong with the world. The other, by Tom Pauken (*The Thirty Years War: The Politics of the Sixties Generation*), is an account of one man's disillusionment with that protest. Near the beginning of his book, Mr. Pauken explains why he refused a student deferment and went to Vietnam: "My convictions left me no choice." Then this by William McGurn: "I wonder if that is not the main difference between Mr. Pauken and many of his contemporaries, including Bill Clinton: For when the crunch came, their convictions always seemed to leave them a great deal of choice."

■ Scott Appleby of Notre Dame wrote a thoughtful piece for the *Tablet* on the forces of cultural conservatism in American politics, and the formidable Father Andrew Greeley jumped all over him in a letter to the editor. "To count the entire evangelical and fundamentalist wing of American religion (about 20 percent of the people) as part of the 'Religious Right' is demonstrably false and moreover a stereotype—as Hillary Clinton pointed out in an interview with *Newsweek*," Fr. Greeley writes. Actually, Appleby didn't say what Fr. Greeley says he said, but the impressive thing here is the compounding of authorities. Greeley by himself is formidable but, in combination with Hillary Clinton, the matter is clearly put beyond reasonable dispute. Fr. Greeley has over the years protested thousands of times that he is a scientist. While others are swayed by bias or wishful thinking, his conclusions are based on rigorous analysis of the evidence. This is evident in his letter to the *Tablet*: "The only good thing about [Appleby's] analysis is that it may encourage the activists of the Christian Right to take possession of the Republican Party at the next convention in 1996 and give the election to Bill Clinton on a silver platter." That, presumably, is an outcome that would be approved also by Fr. Greeley's esteemed colleague in the social sciences, Dr. Hillary Clinton.

■ We do not want to seem unfair to poor Father Greeley, who is, after all, a full professor of sociology at the University of Chicago, but this item turned up in the stacks quite by accident (truly) just after we wrote the above. It is a July 1994 column in the *Los Angeles Times* that appeared at the height of the debate over Hillary Clinton's plan for universal health care. (What, you don't remember the famous health plan?) Fr. Greeley is taking the Catholic bishops to task for opposing the inclusion of abortion in the plan. "The bishops would earn more respect and would be much more effective if they focused on ethical education and persuasion instead of attempting to launch a political campaign that will earn them the blame if universal health care reform is defeated." A year later, everyone recognizes the burden of shame borne by the bishops for their part in foiling Mrs. Clinton's plan, which enjoyed such overwhelming public support. Greeley's column continued: "My argument with the bishops and those who support them is tactical and prudential—I know all about prudence since at the seminary I attended it was deemed the most important of virtues. Why get into a fight that you will lose and that will interfere with other more potentially effective tactics?" The master of prudence also had some positive suggestions: "Why did the bishops not oppose for the record abortion coverage in national health care but refrain from an elaborate campaign that is doomed to failure? Why not concentrate on education and persuasion? Why not try to dialogue with the men and women on the other side?" It is not simply the prudence, but also the rock-like certitude and ability to come up with heretofore unconsidered possibilities that inspires a certain awe in the presence of Father Andrew Greeley, social scientist.

■ "This book should be read by everybody . . ." Fill in the blank: everybody interested in astrophysics, everybody who plays left-handed badminton, and so forth. It's a cliché ending for book reviews which sometimes sneaks by even our astute editors. So *Publishers Weekly* reviews *Family Secrets* by John Bradshaw (pitchman for the "inner child" and other placebos) and ends with this: "Important reading for anyone who has children or grew up with parents." In the world of New York publishing, that means the book is pitched to the minority labelled "traditional."

■ The nastiness is offputting, but of more importance is the remarkable ignorance revealed. The editors of the *New Republic* are complaining that the *Washington Post* ran an op-ed piece by Charles Colson who is complaining, in turn (and with considerable justification), about the media's mistreatment of "the religious right." The *New Republic* editors recount Colson's role in the evil doings of Watergate and then declare: "It's one thing to allow Colson, having done his time, to get on with his life; it's another to allow him to capitalize on his ignominy in order to disseminate his views." The impression left with those readers who may be as ignorant as the editors of the *New Republic* is that here is a criminal who got out of jail yesterday and immediately uses his notoriety to claim a prestigious public platform. The fact is that Chuck Colson completed his seven-month term in January 1975. To the rest of us that is twenty years ago, but to the editors of the *New Republic* it is just yesterday. (Another instance of liberal nostalgia for the bad old days?) Given the chance "to get on with his life," what has Colson done? In these twenty years he has established Prison Fellowship. Far and away the largest program working at transforming the lives of inmates, Prison Fellowship has more than fifty

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thousand volunteers working in prisons in sixty-nine countries around the world. In addition, in these years Colson has, among other things, published twelve books that have sold approximately six million copies, has established a Christian radio program that is carried by more than three hundred stations, and has received the distinguished Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion. As for "capitalizing on his ignominy," all his royalties and speaking fees are given to Prison Fellowship. In the many worlds of evangelical Protestantism and beyond, Chuck Colson has over these twenty years earned an influence that is, quite possibly, next only to that of Billy Graham. But to the editors of the *New Republic,* those worlds do not exist, or do not matter. For them, it will be forever: "Charles W. Colson, Watergate crook extraordinaire, who pleaded guilty in 1974 to obstruction of justice in connection with the burglary of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office." (Remember Daniel Ellsberg? Remember his psychiatrist?) The editors of *National Review* once declared it their purpose to stand athwart history and yell Stop. For the editors of the *New Republic* history stopped a long time ago. No wonder they sound so put out when things keep happening.

■ Call it coincidence, but stories in the paper sometimes do appear in remarkable symmetry. This from the *Washington Post*: "Teen Accused of Trying to Blow Up Mother." It seems this fifteen-year-old girl was so angry with her mother's refusal to stop smoking that she left the gas stove on in the hope that her mother would light a cigarette and blow up the house. The same day from the *New York Times*: "Evolution of Humans May at Last Be Faltering." It figures.

■ A couple of issues ago we joshed an evangelical publishing house that specializes in books giving an explicitly biblical and Christian justification for things that do not need any such justification. We suggested their next title might be *A Christian Guide to Coming In Out of the Rain.* Robert Gibson sends us the bulletin of Grace Lutheran Church, Thornville, Ohio, that schedules on Thursday evenings "Christian Aerobics." Lutherans of all people should know that activities appropriate to the order of creation do not require Christian legitimation. Was it not Luther who said, "I would rather exercise with a sleek Turk than with a flabby Christian"? The same bulletin lists as the sermon hymn for that Sunday, "There's a Wilderness in God's Mercy." It does sometimes seem that way.

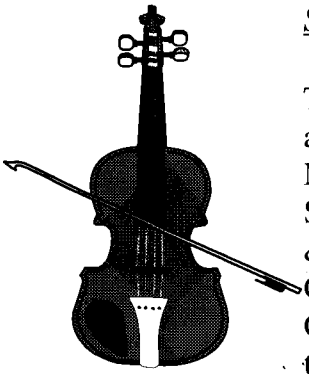
Sources: Dennis Prager on his yeshiva education, *Ultimate Issues,* vol. 1, 1995. Sheridan Gilley on the end of Anglo-Catholicism, *Tablet,* March 18, 1995. Leon Wieseltier on Cornel West, *New Republic,* March 6, 1995. Michael Lind on the conservative revolution, *New Republic,* June 19, 1995. *New Republic* editorial on Jerusalem, June 5, 1995; comments on "ethnic cleansing" in the *Tablet,* May 20, 1995.

While We're At It: *Publishers Weekly* on Barbara Ehrenreich, February 20, 1995. On Dr. Henry W. Foster, Jr., *New York Times,* June 23, 1995. Philip Blackwell review of William Dean book, *Christian Century,* March 1, 1995. Hollywood stars returning to Manhattan, *New York,* February 20, 1995. Dolores O'Riordan quoted in *Rolling Stone,* March 22, 1995. Editorial in Toronto *Globe and Mail,* March 18, 1995. On "marriage gap," *Women's Quarterly,* Spring 1995. On "legal buccaneers," *New York Times,* March 6, 1995. James D. Davidson on mainline decline, *Christian Century,* December 21-28, 1994. Bishop William Frey quoted in *Christian Challenge,* October/November 1994. Euthanasia ruling by Dutch Supreme Court, cited in *Lancet,* June 25, 1994. On the Hemlock Society, *Life at Risk,* May 1995. On flag-burning amendment, *New York Times,* June 8, 1995. Gerry Adams interview reported in *Tablet,* June 3, 1995. John Cornwell on eugenics, *Tablet,* May 27, 1995. Senator Moynihan quoted in *New York Times,* June 18, 1995. William McGurn review of Terry Anderson, *Wall Street Journal,* June 8, 1995. Andrew Greeley letter to *Tablet,* December 24, 1994. Andrew Greeley on abortion, *Los Angeles Times,* July 25, 1994. On book *Family Secrets* by John Bradshaw, *Publishers Weekly,* April 10, 1995. On Charles Colson, *New Republic,* May 29, 1995. *Washington Post* article on teen who tries to blow up mother, and *New York Times* on the end of evolution, both March 14, 1995.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# *Encore Performances*

## Back-issue classics from FIRST THINGS



***Scores of fascinating topics***

The Christian Intellectual Tradition...Women, Ordination, and Angels...Walker Percy and the Christian Scandal...The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Transcendental Subject... Sex and the Single Life...Dr. Death Speaks...The Capitalism & Morality Debate...Religion & the Life of Learning...The Grammar of Baptism...The Decline and Fall of the Christian College...The Constitution and the Erotic Self...Poverty & the Victim Ploy...Bioethics & the Holocaust...An Anatomy of Sexual Ethics...What I Saw at the Academy of Religion...Animal Rights, Human Rights...Abortion: What Americans Really Think About It...The Achievement of Jaroslav Pelikan...Natural Law and the Constitution...Caring About Women, Caring for the Unborn...A Primer on the Devil...What Should We Do About the Poor?... Can Notre Dame Be Saved?...The Disputed Legacy of Reinhold Niebuhr...Two Paths to Black Power...Historians and the Reality of Christ...St. Evelyn Waugh

***Extraordinary compositions by today's top thinkers and writers***

Paul Johnson...Mary Ann Glendon...Robin Darling Young...Glenn C. Loury... Michael Novak...Gertrude Himmelfarb...George Weigel...Jean Bethke Elshtain... David Novak...Max L. Stackhouse...Midge Decter...Peter L Berger...Leon R. Kass...Wolfhart Pannenberg...Linda Chavez...Mark A. Noll...Stanley Hauerwas...John P. Sisk...Avery Dulles...Phillip E. Johnson...Elizabeth Kristol...Hadley Arkes... George M. Marsden...David Singer...Paul V. Mankowski...Gilbert Meilaender...Ruth R. Wisse

***Return this coupon for a free catalog of classic* FIRST THINGS *back issues***

***Inventory is limited, so mail this coupon today!***

*YES...send me your free catalog of back-issue classics!*

NAME_____

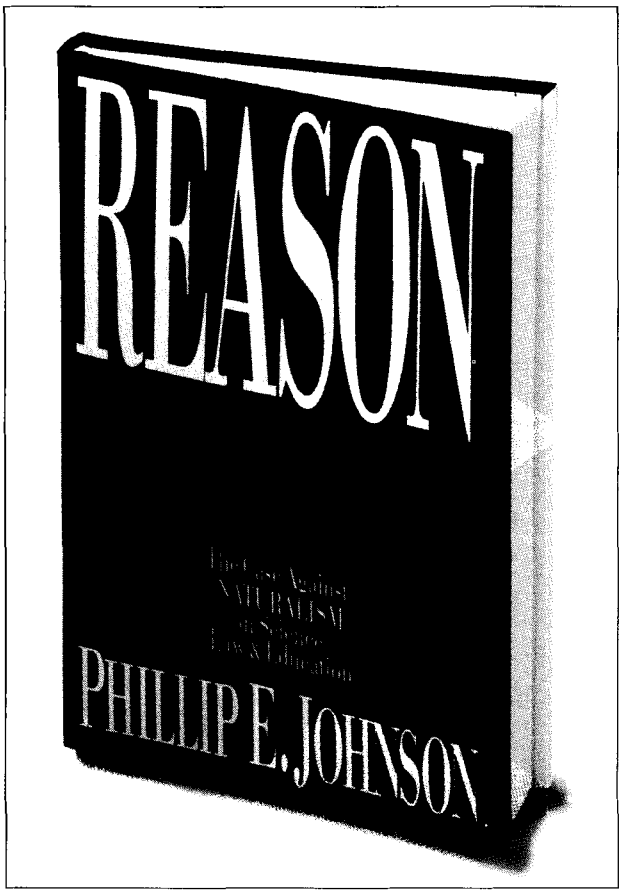
ADDRESS_____

CITY_____ STATE_____ ZIP_____

FT1095

FIRST THINGS Readers Service, 129 Phelps Ave., Suite 312, Rockford, IL 61108


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED




# HE'S BACK
## & THE CULTURE WARS MAY NEVER BE THE SAME.

**"Having demolished the scientific case for Darwinism in his first book, Phillip Johnson now answers the question 'So what?' In a brilliant analysis, he shows how Darwinist assumptions underlie current controversies in ethics, law, education and public policy."**
**CHARLES COLSON,** ***founder of Prison Fellowship***

**"In a brilliantly controversial polemic, Johnson fires an intellectual broadside against what he sees as the marginalization of theism in public life."**
**KIRKUS REVIEWS**

**"Combining the cardinal excellencies of intellectual breadth and spiritual depth . . .** ***Reason in the Balance*** **is a compelling plea to stem the irrationality that threatens the modern mind and the imbalance that staggers our uprooted culture." RAVI ZACHARIAS**

In his first book, *Darwin on Trial,* Berkeley law professor Phillip Johnson took on the heavyweights of science. And now Johnson's back. With *Reason in the Balance* he expands his critique of naturalism from science to law and education. He faces a formidable challenge: for, according to Johnson, the philosophy of naturalism underlies everything from current judicial readings of the Constitution's establishment clause to the controversy over abortion, from the demise of public morality to the physicists' quest for a Grand Unified Theory.

Wrestling with naturalism in its own arenas, Johnson shows why it has become the "established religion of America." How it has succeeded in marginalizing opposing views as "irrational." Where its weaknesses lie. And what "reasonable" alternatives might lead us from the cultural battlefield to genuine cultural dialogue.

**Phillip E. Johnson** *has taught law for over 20 years at the University of California at Berkeley. A graduate of Harvard and the University of Chicago, he was a law clerk for Chief Justice Earl Warren of the U.S. Supreme Court.*

**"With rare lucidity and bracing urgency, Johnson makes a convincing case for the liberation of nature, and of human nature, from naturalism's claim that reality is less than we know it to be."**
**RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS**

**"Phillip Johnson is an author who is simply to be read, and closely studied, by all who wish to understand the forces that actually govern the intellectual world." DALLAS WILLARD**

**"No one who wishes to understand the contemporary culture wars and be involved in their resolution can afford to neglect the study of this book."**
**J. P. MORELAND**

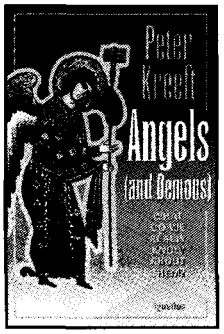
IVP

*Available at your local bookstore or from*

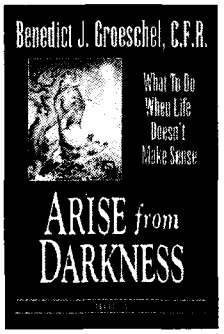
InterVarsity Press
P.O. Box 1400, Downers Grove, IL 60515 1-800-843-9487

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

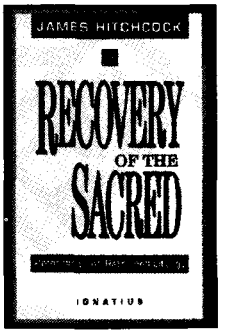
# NEW FROM IGNATIUS



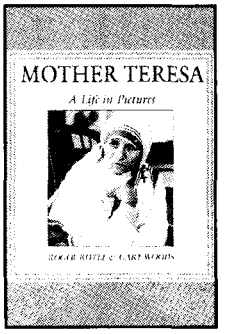

**Angels and Demons**
*Peter Kreeft*
In his usual profound and lucid style, best-selling author Kreeft separates fact from fantasy as he draws on Scripture and Church teaching to answer the 100 most common questions about angels and demons. Based on Kreeft's popular college course. Illustrated.
*0-89870-550-9, $9.95*



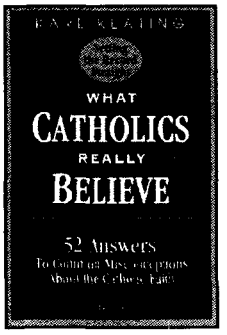

**Arise from Darkness**
*Fr. Benedict Groeschel*
The well-known priest and psychologist draws on years of dealing with people's problems and tragedies to provide practical and spiritual help to anyone burdened by life. Wise guidance that is personal, compassionate and Christ-centered.
*0-89870-525-8, $11.95*



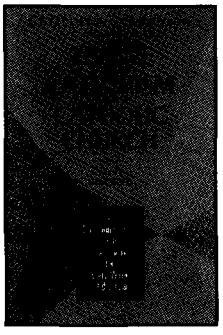

**Recovery of the Sacred**
*James Hitchcock*
An extraordinarily incisive analysis of the destructive liturgical reforms brought about by professional liturgists over the last 30 years. He presents both the profound negative effects on the Church, and solid constructive remedies.
*0-89870-544-4, $11.95*



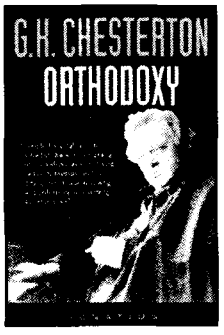

**Mother Teresa:**
***A Life in Picfures***
*R. Royle & G. Woods*
A beautiful coffee-table volume that tells the inspiring life story of the beloved Mother Teresa from childhood to today with over 120 original photos and detailed biographical text. A wonderful gift book.
*0-89870-584-3, $14.95*



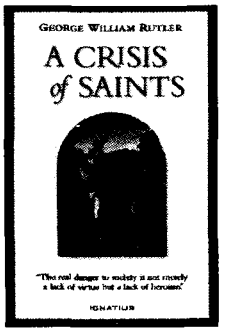

**What Catholics Really Believe**
*Karl Keating*
The popular apologist provides insightful answers to 52 of the most common misconceptions about the Catholic Faith. He draws on Scripture and Church teaching to provide clear explanations about misunderstood Catholic beliefs.
*0-89870-553-3, $8.95*



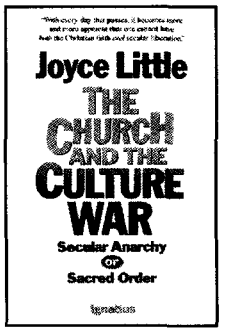
**Living the Catechism of the Catholic Church**
*Bishop Christoph Schönborn*
Schönborn, editor of the monumental *Catechism*, presents a profound commentary on the Creed, one of the major pillars of the *Catechism*. He gives an incisive analysis of the Creed, providing a specific meditation for each week of the year on how to better live the Catholic faith as expressed in the Creed.
*0-89870-560-6, $9.95*



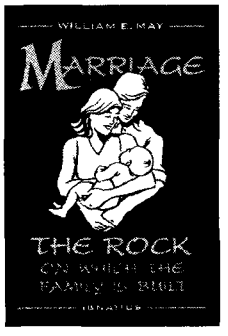

**Orthodoxy**
*G.K. Chesterton*
Among Chesterton's many works, *Orthodoxy* stands out as the most scintillating synthesis of his philosophy and deeply religious faith. In his inimitable, soaring prose, Chesterton tells of his earth-shaking discovery that orthodoxy is the only satisfactory answer to the mystery of life
*0-89870-552-5, $9.95*




**A Crisis of Saints**
*Fr. George Rutler*
Fr. Rutler takes a penetrating look at the moral and spiritual condition of today's society and Church. Showing how moral weakness has been the bane of this era, he uses historical and modern examples to illustrate what is most needed to counteract this are saints who practice heroic virtue in their daily lives.
*0-89870-556-8, $11.95*




**The Church and the Culture War**
*Joyce Little*
A profound study of the current conflict between American secular culture and the Catholic faith. Professor Little helps Catholics understand why this culture war exists, the key conflict between secular human power and the Christian witness to a divine authority, and how to respond to it.
*0-89870-547-9, $12.95*




**Marriage: Rock on Which Family is Built**
*William E. May*
Noted author and theologian May presents a timely treatise that explains how marriage is the indispensable rock upon which is built not only a good family but, as Pope John Paul 11 says, "a civilization of love." This is so precisely because, as May shows, marrage is person-affirming, love-enabling, life-giving and sanctifying.
*0-89870-537-1, $9.95*

**ignatius press**

**33 Oakland Ave., Harrison, NY 10528 • (800) 651-1531**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED